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A Midsummer-Night's Dream

A. W. VERITY

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SHAKESPEARE

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

EDITED BY
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NOTE.

I DESIRE to express my obligations to previous editions of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. I have not, as a rule, recorded my indebtedness in the *Notes*, partly because they do not profess to be an original contribution to the study of the play, still more because the constant mention of commentators takes up space and tends to confuse young students. The modern edition to which I owe most is that of the American scholar, Mr W. J. Rolfe. My debt to Schmidt's *Shakespeare-Lexicon* I cannot attempt to estimate.

In arrangement the volume closely resembles my editions of *Paradise Lost*, though its general character is more elementary. My aim has been to make the *Notes* tolerably simple and for the most part brief. They explain rather than illustrate by parallel passages, and little space is devoted to textual matters, of which the young student seldom makes anything. To relieve and simplify the *Notes*, and partly also that this aspect of Shakespeare may be studied separately from the text, the philological matter has been placed almost entirely in the *Glossary*. It will be observed that the *Introduction* and *Notes* contain a certain amount of literary criticism.

Mr Flather of Emmanuel College, and Mr Whibley of Pembroke College, kindly read parts of the proofs, and another friend compiled the *Index* of words.

A. W. V.

NOTE TO THE SIXTH EDITION.

THE metrical "Hints" added to this edition aim at giving in a small compass the gist of what is commonly agreed upon as to the development and variations of Shakespeare's blank verse. It is almost superfluous to mention my obligations to Dr Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, which deals more or less with the subject-matter of each of the sections of the "Hints." I am also indebted to other writers and to friends.

A. W. V.

May, 1900.

CONTENTS.

	PAGES
INTRODUCTION	ix—li
A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM	1—74
NOTES	75—128
GLOSSARY	129—144
APPENDIX	145—154
HINTS ON METRE	155—165
HINTS ON SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLISH . . .	166—168
INDEX OF WORDS	169—172

INTRODUCTION.

I.

The date of the publication of the play.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream was entered on the Register of the Stationers' Company October 8, 1600. Two Quarto editions of the play were published in that year: the one "Imprinted for Thomas Fisher"; the other "Printed by James Roberts." *The Quarto editions.*

Probably the Quarto published by Roberts was an unauthorised reprint of the other. The differences of reading between them are not very important. Fisher's edition I refer to as the "1st Quarto."

In the 1st Folio (1623), which was the first edition of Shakespeare's collected plays, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was printed from Roberts's Quarto, with some alterations of the text that are important in only a few instances. A fourth version that has to be taken into account is that of the 2nd Folio (1632). This 2nd Folio was a reprint of the 1st, correcting some of its errors, and introducing some conjectural changes which are often quite unnecessary. *The 1st Folio.* *The 2nd Folio.*

A modern text of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is not printed entirely from any one of these four original editions, the two Quartos and the two Folios; it is made up of all four. The wisest course is to keep as close as possible to the 1st Quarto. *The basis of the modern text.*

II.

The probable date of the composition of the play.

Date of the play.

The date of the composition of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is much disputed. I believe that the play was written at the end of the year 1594 or the beginning of 1595. In attempting to determine when one of Shakespeare's plays was written we have to weigh evidence of two kinds—external and internal. The sole piece of external evidence with regard to the date of this play is this: it is mentioned by Francis Meres in *Palladis Tamia*, 1598, in his list of Shakespeare's comedies. That mention of the play proves that it was written and performed before 1598. No other work printed prior to 1598 contains any unmistakable reference to or quotation from *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

External evidence.

Internal evidence.

The simplest form of internal evidence is an allusion to some contemporary event or literary work. A clear allusion of this kind is very valuable; such an allusion, e.g., as that in *Henry V.* (Act v. *Chorus*, 29—34) to the expedition of Essex to Ireland. It is a reference that no one can dispute; it assists us to fix the date of *Henry V.* very precisely.

There is nothing similar in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. Two passages have been thought to contain some allusion, viz. II. 1. 79—117 and V. 52, 53; but neither is certain. Indeed, the second passage has been variously interpreted as an allusion to three different events, though it is a mere conjecture that the lines allude to any special event at all. Now any one can see that a passage which is open to such diverse explanations does not afford certain evidence as to the date of the play. And it may be said at once that there is no passage in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* which justifies any certain conclusion.

Indications that it is an early work.

In the absence therefore of precise internal evidence, we must fall back upon the indications presented by the style and broad characteristics of the play. Consideration of these shows that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is an early work, though not one of Shakespeare's

earliest. Its prevailing tone is youthfulness. One feels in reading it that it is the outcome of youthful imagination. It is not instinct with serious purport and deep thought. It is not touched with cynicism or sadness like some of the later comedies. The puns[1] and 'conceits[2]' (i.e. strained, artificial turns of fancy and expression) noticeable in Shakespeare's early works are noticeable here. There are points of contact between this play and the undoubtedly early piece, *The Comedy of Errors*. There are links with another early comedy, *Love's Labour's Lost*.

The verse also points to an early date. No great stress, indeed, should be laid on the prevalence of rhyme (usually a conclusive proof of an early date), because the character of the play required rhyme. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is very similar in type to the Masque, a form of drama just then coming into vogue; and the verse-portions of Elizabethan Masques were commonly in rhyme. Thus the speeches of the goddesses introduced in the Masque in Act IV. of *The Tempest* are all in rhyme. I suppose that at whatever point in his career Shakespeare had written *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* he would still have employed much rhyme.

Early type of the blank verse.

It is rather the blank verse that reveals signs of immaturity. The number of lines[3] with no extra syllable; the frequency with which the pause falls at the close of the line or couplet; the tendency to balance the line with double epithets—cf. e.g. "By paved fountain or by rushy brook"; the uniformity of rhythm in the long speeches—cf. e.g. Titania's in II. 1. 79—117: these and other details stamp the blank verse of this play as that of Shakespeare's first period of dramatic authorship. In fine, the whole drift of the evidence afforded by the general characteristics of the play is to show that it was written

[1] See I. 1. 186; II. 2. 52; III. 2. 267, 268; IV. 2. 44; V. 118, 254, 312 (with notes).

[2] See II. 1. 196, 197; II. 2. 111; III. 2. 129 (with notes).

[3] i.e. lines that belong to the regular type of blank verse, e.g. "The coúrse | of trúe | love név|er díd | run smóoth." See the "Hints on Metre," p. 155.

several years before the date (1598) at which it was mentioned by Meres.

On the other hand, it cannot safely be placed so far back as 1590, the date to which some critics have assigned it. So early a date, which would refer *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* to the very outset of Shakespeare's career, appears improbable when we compare the piece with *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* marks an advance upon them. Belonging to the same group as these early comedies, it is the best of them—and presumably the latest: it completes the sequence. Some date therefore between the earliest suggested year 1590 and the latest possible year 1597 is most likely to be right.

Probable date 1594 or 1595. Several eminent critics[1] incline to 1594 or 1595, and we cannot be far wrong whichever we select.

III.

The supposed allusion in Act II. *scene* I. *ll.* 81—114, *and its bearing on the date of the play.*

A probable allusion that favours this date. Titania's description in these lines of the disastrous seasons is introduced with singular emphasis—as though the lines, apart from their context, were intended to have some special point and significance such as would be imparted to them by an underlying allusion which the audience would readily understand. Now we know that the summer of the year 1594 was a disastrous season such as the speech describes, being cold, rainy and tempestuous to a remarkable degree. Of the excessive cold and rain, and consequent dearth, of that summer three independent and detailed accounts survive: (1) in the MS. diary (1564—1602) of a well-known quack-physician of the time, Dr Simon Forman; (2) in the entry for 1594 in Stowe's *Chronicle*; (3) in certain dis-

[1] Malone, Halliwell, Dowden, Rolfe say 1594; Stokes (*Chronological Order of Shakespeare's Plays*) says 1595; Gervinus "about 1594 or 1595"; Ward (*Dramatic Literature*) "between 1593—1597."

courses[1] of an Elizabethan divine, Dr King, delivered at York in 1594. All three accounts describe the summer-months of 1594 in terms similar to those of Titania's speech. And to these may be added a reference in the poem *Charitie* by a minor poet of the day, Churchyard. Published in 1595, it glances at the preceding year:

> "A colder time in world was never seene:
> The skies do loure, the sun and moone wax dim;
> Summer scarce known, but that the leaves are greene.
> The winter's waste drives water ore the brim;
> Upon the land great flotes of wood may swim."

We may infer from these four independent records that the summer of 1594 impressed contemporary feeling greatly; and if *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was written and performed at the close of that year, or at the beginning of 1595, when this impression was still vividly present to people's thoughts, the significance of Titania's description would be much enhanced.

IV.

The supposed allusion, or allusions, in Act v. *ll.* 52, 53.

Act v. *ll.* 52, 53; *variously interpreted.*

The second passage which has been thought (in my opinion, wrongly) to contain an allusion that might illustrate the date of composition, and which may therefore be discussed conveniently here, is v. 52, 53:

> "The thrice-three Muses mourning for the death
> Of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary."

In these lines three allusions have been variously traced.

(1) According to some, the reference is to the death of Spenser. Spenser was a learned poet, and he died in poverty: so far the allusion would be appropriate, though one might have expected Spenser's poetry rather than his learning to be mentioned. But Spenser died in January 1599; and the date 1599 renders the reference impossible, unless we assume that the lines were inserted some time after the original production of the play; of which there is no evidence.

[1] *Lectures upon Jonas delivered at Yorke in the yeare of our Lorde* 1594.

(2) According to others, the reference is to Spenser's *The Teares of the Muses*. Spenser's poem does introduce the Nine Muses lamenting the decay of learning and neglect of literature at the time. And the alliteration of Shakespeare's lines might be a glance at Spenser's love of alliteration. But *The Teares of the Muses* appeared in 1591, and if we accept 1594 or 1595 as the date of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, the words "*late* deceas'd" are not appropriate. Moreover there are great objections to this theory apart from the difficulty of dates. Firstly, the remark made by Theseus—"That is some satire, keen and critical"—is not a very suitable description of Spenser's work. *The Teares of the Muses* is more a lament than a "satire." Secondly, there is a ring of sarcasm in the manner in which Theseus rejects the subject as "keen and critical" (i.e. carping). It is probable that Shakespeare and Spenser, having common friends and patrons, were acquainted, and there is no reason for thinking that Shakespeare would speak with disrespect of any work by the elder poet. Further, sarcasm directed against this particular poem would be highly inappropriate, since it contains those friendly lines ("Our pleasant Willy" etc.) which almost certainly refer to Shakespeare. The comment that he places in the mouth of Theseus would be an ungracious return for Spenser's compliment.

(3) According to others, the death of the poet and prose-writer Robert Greene is meant. Greene had died "in beggary." He had posed as a learned man—a scholar-poet, with academic training. Thus, being a Cambridge M.A., Greene was careful to place *Magister Artium* after his name on the title-pages of his earlier plays and pamphlets; and after he received the same degree at Oxford he described himself ostentatiously as *Magister Artium utriusque universitatis*. The glance therefore at his affectation of learning and at his death amid circumstances of great poverty would be pointed. Also, there was a strong element of "keen and critical" satire in his prose-writings. Indeed, in one famous passage[1] that satire had been directed

[1] The oft-quoted lines in his *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592 (a prose-work), about "the onely Shake-scene in a country."

at Shakespeare himself. But Greene died in the autumn of 1592; so that the words "*late* deceas'd" seem equally fatal to this theory.

Really, there is no necessity to associate the lines with any particular event. It is quite possible that in them Shakespeare simply touches with a passing stroke of light ridicule on the contemporary fashion of deploring the decay of learning. Among a certain class of academic writers who did not catch the attention of the public it was the vogue to lament the neglect of serious literature and mourn over the hard lot of the learned. *The Teares of the Muses* was a work of this type. The well-known lines at the end of the first sestiad of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* were another example. These laments of the learned poets were a sort of literary fashion; and Shakespeare may here intend to ridicule them with the easy satire of the successful man who can afford to be good-natured. The verbal form, however, of his remark was probably suggested by the title of Spenser's poem.

Possible explanation of this passage.

Parallels to it.

V.

The Title of the play.

Why is the play called *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*?

Midsummer-day is June 24, St John's day. One would naturally infer from the title that the events of the drama were supposed to occur on the night of Midsummer-day. But it is not so. The action of the piece is laid at the end of April and the beginning of May. This is clear from the references in Act IV.[1] to the May-day ceremonies. The time of action in Act I. is April 29; in Acts II. and III. the night of April 30; and in the rest[2] of the play May 1. We must look therefore for some other explanation of the title *A Midsummer-Night's Dream.*

Time of the play's action.

[1] Scene I. ll. 109, 137, 138. See the note on 109.

[2] The first part of the first scene of Act IV. takes place just before the day-break of May 1.

Midsummer-night in Shakespeare's time.

Midsummer-day, the festival of St John, was formerly one of the chief and most joyous anniversaries of the Christian year. It was to the summer solstice what Christmas still is to the winter. The words of *Luke* i. 14, that many should rejoice at the birth of St John found a literal fulfilment. On the evening of this day numerous ceremonies and festal customs were observed. Bon-fires, called "St John's Fires," were lit; the houses were decorated with green and illuminated; processions with garlands were made and carols sung; and what is important to our purpose, pageants and "triumphs"[1] (i.e. shows) were performed and plays were acted. This last fact presents, I think, a satisfactory explanation of the title of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, viz. that it is so called because it was a play designed for representation on Midsummer-night.[2] In the same way, *Twelfth Night* is so called because it was a play designed for representation on Twelfth Night. And to take another appropriate title, *The Winter's Tale* is "one of those tales which are peculiarly calculated to beguile the dreary leisure of a long winter evening" (Schlegel).

Celebrated with pageants and plays.

This play written for Midsummer-night: hence its title.

Compare "Twelfth Night"; and "The Winter's Tale."

The play appropriate to the occasion:

A play composed for a particular festival may be expected to harmonise with the associations of the festival. *Twelfth Night*, with its pervading atmosphere of genial fun and its happy conclusion, harmonised perfectly with the festal character of Twelfth Night. *A Mid-*

[1] For this sense of *triumph* cf. I. 1. 19 and see the *Glossary*.

[2] Drake thinks that the title may also allude to the popular notion of "Midsummer madness" (cf. *Twelfth Night*, III. 4. 61), and may have been chosen by Shakespeare in view of the extremely imaginative character of the play. It was supposed (he says) "that the brain, being heated by the intensity of the sun's rays, was more susceptible of those flights of imagination which border on insanity, than at any other period of the year." According to this fanciful view, the title "A *Midsummer*-Night's Dream" indicated that the play was a mere "flight of imagination"—the outcome of a heated "Midsummer" brain.

summer-Night's Dream was equally in keeping with the traditional associations of Midsummer-night.

For there were curious superstitions concerning that anniversary. Witches and spirits, unless tradition erred, were peculiarly active then, and strange things happened: things no whit less remarkable than the transformation of Bottom and the wondrous effects of the love-juice. Hence to Shakespeare's audience it must, I think, have seemed extremely appropriate that in a Midsummer-night play there should be so prominent a fairy element. (1) *as regards the fairy element;*

And here we may note an interesting parallel to Shakespeare's fairy-play, viz. Ben Jonson's Masque *The Satyr.* This too (as Jonson says) was written for performance "on Midsummer-day at night." And this too was a fairy-piece. The chief character is a "Satyr" (a kind of wood-spirit), and he is addressed as "Pug" (i.e. Puck). "Queen Mab," who disputes with Titania the honour of being Queen of fairydom, is introduced with a "bevy of fairies," whose whimsical acts form the chief matter of the piece. It is significant that the two great masters of Elizabethan drama should each have written a work in which Midsummer-night is associated so pointedly with the denizens of fairy-land.

Thus the supernatural element in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* accords with the traditions of Midsummer-night. Similarly the comedy's joyous conclusion in marriage-festivities is in harmony with the joyous character of the Midsummer festival. The play is justified of its title. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was singularly suitable for representation on Midsummer-night. (2) *as regards its joyous tone.*

Shakespeare not only entitles the work a "Dream": he insists upon the title. Gervinus says: *Purposely called a "Dream."*

"The piece is called a Midsummer-Night's Dream: the Epilogue expresses satisfaction, if the spectator will regard the piece as a dream; for in a dream time and locality are obliterated; a certain twilight and dusk is spread over the whole; Oberon desires that all shall regard the

matter as a dream, and so it is. Titania speaks of her adventure as a vision, Bottom of his metamorphosis as a dream; all the rest awake at last out of a sleep of weariness, and the events leave upon them the impression of a dream. The sober Theseus regards their stories as nothing else than dreams and fantasies."

To be judged as a "Dream."

The emphasis with which Shakespeare enforces this point is not to be mistaken: nor his purpose. He will have us understand that we must take the piece for what it professes to be, viz. a fanciful creation (so far as concerns the greater part) in which imagination waywardly follows its every whim and freak, recking naught of probability and making no account of the realities of life. We do not expect logical coherence in a dream. We must not look for it in the fairy fantasies of a dream-comedy.

VI.

Was the play written in honour of some wedding?

Plays, especially Masques, were often written for weddings.

In view mainly of the prominence it gives to the theme of marriage *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is supposed by many critics to have been written on the occasion of some particular marriage. At the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th the performance of a play at the wedding-festivities of a great nobleman occurred constantly. The pieces composed for such occasions were commonly Masques. Now *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* (as I observed) is in several features akin to a Masque. It is certainly the sort of play that would be composed for a marriage. And if it was so composed—if it concluded the festivities of some wedding that had taken place on Midsummer-day—then parts of the play (for instance, Oberon's last speech) had at the original representation a particular, a personal, significance which for us is lost.

Difficulty of connecting this play with any particular wedding.

But though this view is much favoured by the character of the play itself, yet there is no special wedding with which we can confidently associate it. Some, indeed, suppose that the marriage honoured by Shakespeare was that of the Earl of Essex in 1590; others

that it was the marriage of the Earl of Southampton (the patron to whom *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* were dedicated, once thought the "W. H." of the *Sonnets*) in 1598. But the dates are fatal to either view. Nor is Mr Fleay's suggestion that the wedding was that in 1595 of the Earl of Derby (whose brother had been patron of the theatrical company of which Shakespeare was a member) more than a mere conjecture.

Perhaps, therefore, it is enough to treat the comedy as it has been treated above, viz. as simply one of the many festival-plays that must have been written for performance on Midsummer-night. We have seen that it is eminently suitable for such an occasion; and, after all, marriage is a tolerably familiar theme on the stage.

VII.

The diversity of action in the play.

The action of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is very varied. There are really four distinct elements in the plot. These elements—skilfully connected by certain links of common interest—are: (1) the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta; (2) the preparation and performance of the "interlude" of "Pyramus and Thisbe," which forms part of the festivities at the marriage; (3) the fortunes of the two pairs of lovers whose marriages depend partly on the decision of Theseus; (4) the dispute of Oberon and Titania, who are interested in the marriage of Theseus, together with the tricks of Puck, by whom, at the bidding of Oberon, the final reconciliation of the lovers is effected. An important link between (3) and (4) is the use of the love-juice: "the love troubles of mortals have their miniature counterpart in the jealousy of the elfin royal pair,... and as the human wooers are beguiled by the power of Cupid's magic herb, the fairy queen is in like manner victimized" (Boas).

Four chief elements of the plot.

VIII.

The probable sources of certain details of the elements of the plot.

Theseus and Hippolyta.

What Shakespeare knew concerning Theseus and Hippolyta was probably derived in the main from two works:

Shakespeare indebted slightly to:

(1) The *Life of Theseus* in the translation (1579) of Plutarch's *Lives*[1] by Sir Thomas North;

(2) *The Knight's Tale* in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.*

The *Life of Theseus* in North's *Plutarch* gives two legends as to his marriage. According to one, Theseus made an expedition against the Amazons, took "*Antiopa* the Amazon" prisoner, and married her: hence the allusion to *Antiopa* in the play (II. i. 80). According to the other story, the Amazons invaded Athens and were defeated by Theseus, who afterwards married the Amazon Queen, *Hippolyta.* Perhaps the reason why Shakespeare follows the second story and makes Theseus marry Hippolyta, not Antiopa, is that Chaucer had done so in *The Knight's Tale.* The names *Egeus*[2] (really the name of the father of Theseus), *Ægle*, *Perigenia* (in the form *Perigouna*) and *Ariadne* all occur in Plutarch's *Life*, which also records the incidents briefly referred to in Act II. sc. i. ll. 78—80.

(1) Plutarch's "Life of Theseus";

There are various indications that Shakespeare had read *The Knight's Tale.* In the *Tale* (we noted), as in the play, Hippolyta is the bride of Theseus. The name *Philostrate* occurs in the *Tale* (l. 570) as that of the Chamberlain of the court of Theseus, i.e. the

(2) Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale."

[1] Reprinted 1595, 1603, 1612; Shakespeare makes extensive use of this work in *Julius Cæsar*, *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra.* Plutarch narrates the lives of celebrated Greek and Roman generals and statesmen.

[2] More correctly *Ægeus*; cf. *Ægean* Sea, named after him; for *Egeus* cf. Chaucer's *Legend of Ariadne*, 59, "of Athenes king *Egeus.*"

official who, like Philostrate in the play, might supervise court-festivities. Part of the action of the *Tale* takes place in a grove outside the walls of Athens: possibly this suggested to Shakespeare "the wood, a league without the town" (I. 1. 165), in which most of the action of the play is laid. In the *Tale* (ll. 815—838) Theseus is described as very fond of hunting in May: we may compare the hunting-party on May-morning in the play (IV. 1. 100). The *Tale* (ll. 107—169) relates how Theseus attacked Thebes, slew the king Creon, sacked the town, and returned to Athens "With laurel crowned as a conqueror." Perhaps this is the incident referred to in the line "When I from Thebes came last a conqueror" (v. 51). And in one or two passages the *Tale* has verbal resemblances to the play (cf. I. 1. 20, 167, notes).

Shakespeare's indebtedness, as we see, to these two sources, Plutarch's *Life* and Chaucer's *Tale*, is very slight. The bare fact that Theseus overthrew the Amazons and married their queen, Hippolyta; a few names and allusions; possibly a few hints from Chaucer: these make up the sum total of Shakespeare's obligations as regards this element of the plot.

IX.

"*Pyramus and Thisbe.*"

The original story in Ovid.

The story of "Pyramus and Thisbe" is told at length in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, IV. 55—166. Of the *Metamorphoses* there was a famous Elizabethan version, in long rhymed couplets, by a Cambridge scholar, Arthur Golding. This translation, first published in 1565 and often reprinted, appears to have been one of Shakespeare's favourite books. To it he probably owed much of his knowledge of classical mythology. It is certainly the main source of the "interlude" of "Pyramus and Thisbe" in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. Shakespeare not only follows Golding's version in the general outline of the facts of the story: there are even some verbal coincidences which show how closely he studied this authority (cf. v. 139, 164, notes).

Golding's "Ovid" (used by Shakespeare).

Chaucer's "Legend of Thisbe."

Another work on the same subject, also based on Ovid, is Chaucer's *Legend of Thisbe of Babylon.* Very probably Shakespeare read Chaucer's poem, though it is not possible to trace any indication in the play that he did so. A third version of the story which should be mentioned because it occurs in a well-known poetical miscellany of that time is "A New Sonet[1] of Pyramus and Thisbie" in Clement Robinson's *A Handful of Pleasant Delights* (1584). It is likely that Shakespeare was acquainted with this collection of poems by various writers: the first piece in it bears a decided resemblance to Ophelia's speech, "There's rosemary... There's fennel," in *Hamlet*, IV. 5. 175—185. The "New Sonet of Pyramus" presents one marked similarity to the "interlude" in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream:* it contains alliteration (intended seriously) of the extravagant type ridiculed by Shakespeare; cf. for instance the lines:

An Elizabethan version of the story known probably to Shakespeare.

"And then the beast with his bright blade[2],
he slew certáin."

A favourite Elizabethan story.

Mr Halliwell-Phillipps writes[3]: "The story of Pyramus and Thisbe was very familiar to an Elizabethan audience, not merely in translations of Ovid, but as having been told in prose and verse by numerous English writers of the sixteenth century." The fact that the story was so popular is important. In Shakespeare's telling it becomes intentionally a burlesque; and a burlesque has little point if the thing burlesqued be not familiar.

The "interlude": a parallel to it.

With the "interlude" we should compare the "entertainment" of the "Nine Worthies" in *Love's Labour's Lost.* This also was acted by inexpert amateurs—the village schoolmaster, a "swain," a page. No doubt, each—the "interlude" no less than the "entertain-

[1] i.e. Sonnet, then used of any short poem.

[2] Cf. v. 147. For the accentuation *certáin*, common in old ballads and perhaps ridiculed by Shakespeare, cf. v. 131.

[3] *Memoranda* on *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, p. 25.

ment"—is a picture, exaggerated as regards details but in the main true, drawn from contemporary life. Probably the representations given by the Guilds or Trade-Companies furnished hints for each. These representations, performed by tradesmen like the "rude mechanicals" of Athens, with scenery and "properties" not much more elaborate than those of the "interlude," were usually of a very artless, primitive character. Shakespeare's own county was famous for its Guild-performances, and at Stratford, not many miles from their great centre, Coventry, he must in his boyhood have known or known of them.

What may have suggested it.

Again, there was, it would appear, a good deal of play-acting of an even simpler sort among the Elizabethans. Till the advent of Puritanism, the English working folk (such as Bottom and his friends really are) were singularly fond of anything like a play or pageant. Many of their popular sports and amusements had a certain element of acting, e.g. the "disguises" and "mummings" at Christmas, the "morris-dance" at Whitsuntide, and the "May-day" games. I do not doubt that pieces like the "Nine Worthies" and the "interlude" were acted by village-companies on the great festivals[1], and that Shakespeare had witnessed such performances as he describes with a touch of exaggeration—perhaps as a boy had taken part in them. There is a vivid reality about the *dramatis personæ* of the "interlude" which gives the impression of its having been studied and reproduced from the life.

X.

"*Cupid's Flower.*"

The third element of the plot—viz. the fortunes of the pairs of lovers—is Shakespeare's own invention, so far as we know. But the incident of the love-juice, on which so much turns, and which brings the lovers

The Spanish romance "Diana."

[1] Especially Corpus Christi Day, on which the Coventry plays were acted.

into closer connection with the fairies, is thought to be due to some similar incidents in the Spanish romance *Diana*, by George of Montemayor (1512—1562). This work is a pastoral novel or romance in prose, with occasional pieces of verse. It had a great reputation[1] and was translated into various languages. The earliest extant English version, by Bartholomew Yong, appeared in 1598. It has been objected that Shakespeare could not have owed anything to a Spanish work not rendered into English till 1598. But the objection has little force. It is almost certain that Shakespeare read *Diana* before he wrote *The Two Gentlemen of Verona;* and few critics (if any) would place the date of that play so late as 1598. A piece called *The History of Felix and Philiomena*, based probably upon *Diana* (in which these names occur), was acted in January 1585. Sidney's[2] *Arcadia* is said to show unmistakably the influence of *Diana*. We may safely conclude that *Diana* was known in England before 1598.

Translated into English, 1598.

Known previously in England.

I find in the *Preface* to Yong's translation (1598) the remark that in rendering *Diana* he made use of "the French copies." In the *Dedication* of the volume he names one of these French versions. Now the importation of French and Italian romances into England was a marked feature of the literary history of the time, and it may fairly be assumed that French versions of a romance so widely celebrated as *Diana* would find their way into this country, and be accessible and intelligible to every Elizabethan Englishman of average education who lived in London (as Shakespeare did for so long). The existence therefore of these French translations of the Spanish romance satisfactorily explains how the work might have become known to Shakespeare and his contemporaries before the appearance of Yong's English translation in 1598.

How known.

[1] Milton (*Areopagitica*) mentions it along with the *Arcadia* as a work with which everyone might be expected to be acquainted.

[2] Sidney died 1586.

Of course, the notion of a love-juice possessed of magical properties need not in the first instance have been invented by the author of *Diana*. Such notions belonged to the traditional superstition and mysterious lore of the Middle Ages. They were common property—not the invention of any particular author. Old romances are full of references to herbs[1] having wonderful "virtues." The particular way, however, in which Shakespeare applies the idea seems to have been suggested by the use which George of Montemayor had previously made of it.

The notion of the love-juice not peculiar to any particular writer.

XI.

The Fairy Lore of the play.

In the fairy lore of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* Shakespeare naturally follows tradition. He takes existing conceptions and beliefs and adapts them to his purpose, uniting the fairy lore of poetry and romance[2] with the fairy lore of popular superstition.[3]

Shakespeare's fairy lore:

The fairy king with his "knights" (II. 1. 25), the fairy queen with her "train" of attendant fays, these are figures drawn from the traditional presentment of the fairy community by poets and romance-writers. Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, published not long since (1590), had done more than any other English work to bring them into vogue. They represent fairy lore in its literary aspect. They are not the simple conceptions which the superstitious fancy of simple people creates. But Puck is such a conception. He is not the creation of poets: he is a "spirit of another sort"—as it were, country born and bred: the hero of the "old wives' tales" of homely villagers.

poetic;

popular.

[1] Cf. the herb "hæmony" in Milton's *Comus*, 629—649.

[2] e. g. works such as *Huon of Bordeaux* (see p. xxvii).

[3] Cf. Keightley, "the fairy mythology is an attempt to blend the elves of the village with the fays of romance."

XII.

The Fairy Court.

The fairy king and queen in Chaucer.

The notion of fairy or elf monarchs may be traced in English poetry as far back as Chaucer. Compare the beginning of *The Wife of Bath's Tale*. In the old days, it says, of King Arthur

> "The elf-queen, with her joly compaignye,
> Dancede ful oft in many a grene mede" (ll. 4, 5).

Compare again *The Merchant's Tale*, which introduces

> "Pluto, that is the kyng of fayerye,
> And many a lady in his compaignie
> Folwyng hys wif, the queene Preserpina" (ll. 983—985).

Had Shakespeare read "The Merchant's Tale"?

The Merchant's Tale has two points of resemblance to *A Midsummer-Night's Dream:* (1) in it—as in the play—there is a dispute between the fairy king and queen; (2) the fairy king intervenes between, and seeks to reconcile, a husband and wife just as Oberon intervenes between and reconciles the lovers. It is scarcely a rash assumption that Shakespeare read this *Tale*.

XIII.

Oberon as the Fairy King.

Oberon.

When *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was written, Oberon had not long been known in English mythology as the fairy king. Chaucer, as we saw, assigned that post to Pluto. Oberon was not native to English mythology. He was introduced from France, being identical with the French Alberon or Auberon. But Alberon or Auberon in turn was not

His German origin.

French in origin; for he had been introduced into France from German mythology, being identical with the German spirit Alberich or Elferich. Shakespeare's Oberon therefore was originally a German fairy who came into English fairy lore through a French medium.

The German Alberich[1] or Elferich means "Elf-king".

[1] *Alberich* = Germ. *alb*, 'elf' + *rich*, 'king.' With *alb* cf. Icelandic *álfr*, Swedish *alf*, A. S. *ælf* (whence *elf*). With *rich* cf. Old English

Alberich figures in many German fairy tales and legends. For instance, in the *Nibelungen-lied* it is Alberich who guards the treasure which Siegfried has to win from the Nibelungen. How this elf-king Alberich or Elferich passed from German mythology into French, or by what process the name Alberich or Elferich became in French Alberon (which would soften into Auberon[1]), does not concern us here. Enough that the transition did take place, and that Alberon was an important character in one of the most famous of the many famous French romances that dealt with the life and legends of Charlemagne and his "peers."

Introduced from German into French literature.

This romance was called, from the hero's name, *Huon de Bordeaux*. Auberon is entitled therein "le Roi du royaume de la féerie." He plays a considerable part in the romance as patron and protector of Huon, with whom he is constantly associated in later writings. In its earliest form *Huon de Bordeaux* is a verse-romance dating from about the 12th or 13th century. From this verse-romance a prose-romance was afterwards formed. This prose-romance was translated from the French into English by Lord Berners about 1534. The translation[2] was unquestionably the agency by which Auberon—or Oberon, to give him the Anglicised name used throughout by Lord Berners,—was first introduced into English romance and poetry[3] as king of the fairies. And Lord Berners' *Book of Duke Huon of Bordeaux* had so great a repute that there is certainly a probability that it was known to Shakespeare.

Appears in "Huon de Bordeaux."

This romance translated into English.

Hence Oberon is introduced into English literature.

riche (whence *rich* in modern E.), Gothic *reiks*, Old High Germ. *riche*, 'powerful'; and modern Germ. *reich*, 'realm.' Germ. *alb* and Germ. *elf* are allied, so that '*Alb*erich' and '*Elf*erich' are parallel forms.

[1] So *aube*, the dawn = Lat. *alba*. Cf. Brachet's *Dict.* p. xcvi. "*al* before a consonant drops to *au*, as *calcare*, O. Fr. *caucher*."

[2] Reprinted in 1570 and 1601. Several other romances of the Charlemagne series were published by Caxton in English versions.

[3] Cf. Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, II. 1. 6, II. 10. 75.

Oberon's fairy realm traditionally (?) placed in the East.

It illustrates at any rate one point in this play. Shakespeare associates Oberon and Titania with India[1]: their "fairy land" lies evidently in the far East. Now in the romance Oberon is described as "King of Momur," and this mythic fairy realm (we read) is situate a long way east of Jerusalem—somewhere in remote central Asia. The play therefore and the romance coincide in this small point, and I suspect that the association of the fairy monarch with the East was a tradition of fairy lore.

Oberon already known to the English stage.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream did not mark Oberon's first introduction on the English stage. One of the characters in Greene's historical play *James IV.* is "Oboram King of Fayeries," attended by a train of fays. This play, though not printed till 1598, is thought to have been written about 1589. Very likely Shakespeare was acquainted with it, though his Oberon bears but slight resemblance to Greene's "Oboram."

XIV.

Titania as the Fairy Queen.

Titania = Diana.

Shakespeare calls the fairy queen Titania because that was a title of the classical goddess Diana[2], whom a popular belief of Shakespeare's time identified with the queen of the fairies. There was a general tendency[3] in the Middle Ages to identify fairies and elves with the "nymphs" and "satyrs" of classical mythology. Diana was supposed to be attended by a train of "nymphs," so that when these were regarded as fairies, Diana came to be regarded commonly as the fairy queen. Keightley refers to King James's *Demonologie*, which speaks of the

Fairies identified with classical "nymphs."

[1] Cf. II. 1. 22, 69, 124.

[2] *Titanius* was used of the sun-god, and *Titania* was applied to Diana as his sister; cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, III. 171.

[3] Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, ed. Stallybras, pp. 431—436; A. Maury, *Les Fées du Moyen-Age*, p. 62.

class of spirits that "by the Gentiles[1] was called *Diana* and her wandering court [i.e. "nymphs"], and amongst us was called the *Phairie*[2]" (ed. 1603, p. 56).

Other names assigned to the fairy queen.

Whether Shakespeare was the first to apply the name Titania to the fairy queen I do not know. Chaucer called her Proserpine. In an entertainment performed before Queen Elizabeth when she visited Lord Hertford at Elvetham House in Hampshire, 1591, the fairy queen is introduced as "Aureola[3]." Sometimes "Queen Mab" (*Romeo*, I. 4. 53) is treated as the fairy sovereign.

XV.

Puck or Robin Goodfellow.

Origin of the name "Puck."

Originally "Puck" was not a proper name. It was "a generic term for a fairy, and we recognise it further in the Icelandic *puki*, the Irish *pooca*, the Welsh *pwcca*, even the Cornish *pixie*, and the Puk and Niss Puk of the Frisians and Danes[4]." All these allied words meant "elf, sprite." Apparently Shakespeare was the first to use this general term "Puck[5]" as a proper name of the particular sprite commonly called "Robin Goodfellow[6]." This spirit was a conspicuous figure in English and German mythology. His attributes are very similar in both, and his German title "*Knecht Ruprecht*[7]" corre-

Puck="Robin Goodfellow"= German "Knecht Ruprecht."

[1] i.e. the Greeks and Romans.

[2] i.e. *Fairy*, a collective word=fairies (see *Glossary*).

[3] This, *not* Titania, is the name given in the account of the entertainment in Nichols' *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*.

[4] Chambers' *Encyclopædia* (1892). Add Scotch *pauky*, a sprite.

[5] The lines of the play in which the name occurs are II. 1. 40, 148; IV. 1. 69; V. 438, 442.

[6] Note II. 1. 34; III. 2. 355; IV. 1. 51, 85; V. 445.

[7] *Robin* is a French corruption of *Robert*=Germ. *Ruprecht*. "*Knecht Ruprecht*" was a favourite character in German comedies of the 16th and 17th centuries (Grimm).

sponds closely with the English "Robin Goodfellow." He was also known in England as the "Hob-goblin" (cf. II. 1. 40)—*Hob* being merely a corruption of *Robin*. The character which Shakespeare assigns to him as that of a freakish "sprite," now mischievous, now friendly, less polished and dainty than the "elves" or "fairies," is drawn from popular tradition.

Thus Puck is a spirit who helps in, or (if displeased) interferes with, domestic duties (II. 1. 36—38).

Illustrations of the traditional conception of his character.

Cf. Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*[1] (1584): "Robin good fellowe...would supplie the office of servants, speciallie maids; as to make a fier in the morning, sweepe the house[2], grind[3] mustard and malt."

Cf. also Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, which mentions those spirits "called with us hobgoblins, and Robin goodfellows that would...grind[3] corn" (1806 ed., I. 68).

Puck takes different shapes, especially the form of some animal, generally with the object of frightening people or making them fall into ridiculous mistakes, or of deceiving animals (II. 1. 45—52, III. 1. 111—114). The old *Life of Robin Goodfellow* (printed 1628) records many adventures which turn entirely upon his power of transforming himself, now into a horse, now into a dog, and so on. The notion is very common in fairy tales. The power was not peculiar to Puck.

Puck misleads[4] travellers (II. 1. 39) at night by means of a false light (III. 1. 112), called by the Germans an *elf-licht*. Keightley says that in Devonshire "*Pixy*-led" meant 'led astray by a spirit' (i.e. a "puck"); and that in Worcestershire "*Poake*-ledden" had the same sense. This notion too is wide-spread.

[1] Nicholson's *Reprint*, p. 437. The *Discoverie* (i.e. 'uncovery', exposure of, witchcraft) is the standard English work of that time on current superstition and myth. No doubt, Shakespeare was acquainted with it. Reginald Scot wrote against superstitions of all sorts.

[2] Cf. Act v. ll. 396, 397 (note).

[3] Cf. Act II. 1. 36 ("labour in the quern").

[4] This custom was common to a whole class of spirits such as Will-o'the-Wisp and Jack-o'-Lanthorn.

XVI.

Characterisation of the Fairies of the play.

Gervinus says: "Airy and swift, like the moon, the fairies circle the earth; they avoid the sunlight without fearing it, and seek the darkness; they love the moon, and dance in her beams; and above all they delight in the dusk and twilight, the very season for dreams, whether waking or sleeping. They send and bring dreams to mortals; and we need only recall to mind the description of Queen Mab in *Romeo and Juliet* to discover that this is the charge essentially assigned to them, and the very means by which they influence mortals.

The manner in which Shakespeare has fashioned their inner character in harmony with this outward function is full of profound thought. He depicts them as beings without delicate feeling and without morality. Careless and unscrupulous, they tempt mortals to infidelity; the effects of the mistakes which they have contrived make no impression on their minds; they feel no sympathy for the deep afflictions of the lovers, but only delight and marvel over their mistakes and their foolish demeanour. The poet further depicts his fairies as beings of no high intellectual development. Whoever attentively reads their parts will find that nowhere is reflection imparted to them. Only in one exception does Puck make a sententious remark upon the infidelity of man, and whoever has penetrated into the nature of these beings will immediately feel that it is out of harmony. They can make no direct inward impression upon mortals; their influence over the mind is not spiritual, but throughout material; it is effected by means of vision, metamorphosis, and imitation. Titania has no spiritual association with her friend, but mere delight in her beauty, her 'swimming gait,' and her powers of imitation. When she awakes from her vision there is no scene of reconciliation with her husband... no trace of reflection, no indication of feeling....

They are represented, these little gods, as natural souls, without the higher human capacities of mind, lords of a king-

dom, not of reason and morality, but of imagination and ideas conveyed by the senses; and thus they are uniformly the vehicle of the fancy which produces the delusions of love and dreams. Their will, therefore, only extends to the corporeal. They lead a luxurious, merry life, given up to the pleasures of the senses; the secrets of nature and the powers of flowers and herbs are confided to them. To sleep in flowers, lulled with dances and songs, with the wings of painted butterflies to fan the moon-beams from their eyes, this is their pleasure; the gorgeous apparel of flowers and dewdrops is their joy....

This life of sense and nature is seasoned by the power of fancy, and by desire after all that is most choice, most beautiful, and agreeable. They harmonise with nightingales and butterflies; they wage war with all ugly creatures, with hedgehogs, spiders, and bats; dancing, play, and song are their greatest pleasures; they steal lovely children, and substitute changelings; they torment decrepit old age, toothless gossips, and the awkward company of the players of Pyramus and Thisbe, but they love and recompense all that is pure and pretty....The only pain which agitates these beings is jealousy....They are full of wanton tricks and railleries, playing upon themselves and upon mortals pranks which never hurt, but which often torment. This is especially the property of Puck."

XVII.

"*A Midsummer-Night's Dream*" and "*The Tempest.*"

The two main points of contrast.

It is natural to compare the fairies of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* with the "spirits" of *The Tempest.* The supernatural beings of the two plays present, no doubt, certain resemblances; but there are essential differences between them—notably these:—

Firstly, the fairies of this play are the superiors of "the human mortals" on whom they exercise their power uncontrolled. In *The Tempest*, on the other hand, man at his highest development, as represented by Prospero, is the superior. The spirit world lies subject to him. The spirits do his bidding.

They resemble forces of nature whose secrets man has mastered. The fairy Oberon is supreme over man in the one piece: the man Prospero is supreme over spirits in the other.

Secondly, the fairies of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, as I have endeavoured to show, are traditional conceptions: Oberon and Titania in one way, Puck in another. They are not essentially the creations of the poet. They represent existing material which he found ready to hand and re-wrought—rough sketches, so to speak, which the artist touched to finer issues, adding and removing something, yet preserving the original outlines and character. But the spirits of *The Tempest* are essentially Shakespeare's own conception and creation; and comparison of Puck with Ariel must, I think, start from this basis, that Puck is the product of popular superstition refined, but not re-created, by Shakespeare's imagination, while Ariel is the pure outcome of that imagination, unaffected by external influences.

XVIII.

Some characteristics of the play.

I have said that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* has much resemblance to a Masque. In the Masque the slender story (told mostly in rhyme) was fanciful—often allegorical. The characters were almost always supernatural beings, drawn, as a rule, from classical mythology. The locality was some classical or purely ideal region. The chief interest lay in the spectacle and scenic effects. Much music, and many graceful dances, were introduced. All these in a greater or lesser degree are features of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*[1].

Characteristics of the Masque.

Resemblance of this play to a Masque.

[1] The fairy parts of the play, represented with adequate scenery and accompanied by Mendelssohn's incidental music, furnish a good notion of an Elizabethan or Jacobean Masque-performance.

An important element of the Masque was the "Anti-Masque." This was a comic underplot or "interlude" designed to be a contrast to, and parody of, the main plot. The "interlude" in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is a kind of "Anti-Masque." Dramatically, the main purpose that it fulfils is contrast. The clowns serve as opposites to the fairies and to the heroic figures of Theseus and his courtiers. Puck watching the rehearsal in Act III.: Titania twining her arms round Bottom's neck: could the effect of contrast achieve more? And when Quince and his company are set amid the brilliance of the palace the contrast is scarcely less striking.

Twofold purpose of the "interlude":

(1) as a contrast;

Further, the subject-matter of the "interlude" is almost a parody of the love-element in the previous Acts. The humorous extravagance of love is laid bare for the edification of the pairs of lovers. They look on and laugh: and their laugh is against themselves. In Pyramus and Thisbe they see themselves unconsciously very much as others have seen them.

(2) as a parody.

Only the names in the play are Greek: else it has nothing classical about it: it is essentially romantic and Elizabethan. Theseus reminds us of some hero of mediæval romance, or great Elizabethan noble such as Shakespeare's early patron Southampton. Philostrate is an Elizabethan Master of the Revels. The clowns have worked for bread on Warwickshire, not Athenian, stalls. The lovers might bear English names. The hunting-party and hounds would be appropriate in the setting of an English landscape: indeed the scene is English with its setting of English trees and flowers (II. i. 249—252, III. i. 169, 170). May-day customs and the like (e.g. carols and the "nine men's morris") are introduced or mentioned with entire disregard of time. In modern dramas and works of fiction so much attention is paid to correctness of detail that Shakespeare's laxity appears at first a little strange. But his way was the Elizabethan way. Poets took classical themes and adapted them to a modern setting, careless of the confusion that resulted from the union of old and new.

The play romantic, not classical.

Its anachronisms.

XIX.

Some characters of the play.

The characterisation of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is very slight. It is to some extent a comedy of confusions and cross-purposes like the *Comedy of Errors*, where the interest depends on incident. Elaborate character-drawing would not harmonise with the fanciful tone. A study of character like Hamlet could have no place in a "Dream." Given unconventional circumstances, the *dramatis personæ* may be conventional; indeed, through contrast with their surroundings, they are more effective. So Shakespeare uses familiar types, and only distinguishes them by very simple means—if at all.

The characters.

Mainly conventional.

Of the fairies something has been said: of the "human mortals" of the play there is little to say. Demetrius and Lysander belong to a familiar class of lover and are practically undistinguishable. Remove the names from their speeches and you could seldom tell which was the speaker. They are neither original nor individual figures. Hermia and Helena, if less alike, are equally commonplace. Place either beside the masterly creations in the later, maturer comedies—beside Rosalind in *As You Like It* or Beatrice in *Much Ado*—and how conventional, how lacking in originality, does she show by the contrast! Over their respective lovers, indeed, they have just this advantage—they are distinguished, though very simply. Thus Hermia[1] is short and dark-complexioned: Helena[2] tall and fair. Hermia is sharp of tongue, a very "vixen": Helena gentle, "never curst," a "right maid" for her yielding, timid spirit. So we cannot confuse them: but it needed no Shakespeare to conceive and depict such characters. The only human figures really touched with his genius are Theseus and Bottom.

Demetrius and Lysander.

Hermia and Helena.

Theseus represents (in Dowden's very just criticism) "Shakespeare's early ideal of a heroic warrior and man of action." Not by what he does (for he has very

Theseus.

[1] Note especially III. 2. 257, 263, 288—298, 323—330.

[2] Note especially III. 2. 288—298, 300—305.

little to do), but by his presence, he creates an impression of greatness and strength—strength of mind, will, body. He has the self-centred serenity of strength, the calmness of conscious power. No crisis would evoke from him the fret and excitement of weaker natures. All who come into contact with him defer to his authority. None attempts to question his word or cross his purpose. Not that there is aught of the overbearing tyrant in him. Rather, he has a full measure of the gentle considerateness innate in many men of his strong masterful type. In his attitude, for example, towards the interlude-players how much more courteous and forbearing is he than his bride. No wounding word of disparagement drops from his lips; and when he thanks them at the end they go away well pleased that their "duke" has been so pleased. His speech "The kinder we" etc. (v. 89—105) is very characteristic of the graciousness of his strong nature. Equally interesting as an illustration of character is his criticism of playwrights and players, "The best in this kind" etc. (v. 213). For him all acting, however good, is of little account because unreal—a make-believe and mere "shadow" of life. The motto of such men is deeds, not words—fact, not fancy. And so Theseus depreciates imagination with something of the intolerance of the man of action for whom the humblest bit of life, of actual experience, has infinitely more value than the finest fiction. One could wish that the play presented more scope of action for this strong, heroic king of men.

Bottom.

Bottom is more fortunate. Prominence is not denied him. He struts the stage a very embodiment of self-assertive conceit. He is one of those village tyrants who chancing to be a little cleverer than their fellows are looked up to as more than mortal. Bottom's supremacy is so unquestioned, greatness is so thrust upon him by his associates, that self-assertion became his ruling passion, a second nature. He *must* push himself to the front: it is his destiny. Every episode in the play in which he takes part serves to illustrate his assurance and egotism. Thus, he would dearly like to play the chief parts in the "interlude": failing that, he orders

his friends about, makes alterations in the piece as seems to him good, and generally assumes the dignity, though not the labours, of the post of manager which Quince nominally fills. His self-complacency does not desert him in the unexpected presence of the fairy queen: he can still "gleek," and as for the members of her train, they soon learn whose bidding they are to perform. Titania herself must be still, an he would sleep. Afterwards he will have Peter Quince make a ballad of his adventures that he, the hero, may reap fresh glory. And he ends by correcting the duke himself (v. 185—188). There is a singular completeness about Bottom's self-conceit: it is never marred by a lapse into modesty: it holds its course unfaltering—combined (and this is very true to life) with the utmost good temper and a complete absence of a sense of humour. But observe that it is not proof against flattery: vanity has always its weak side, and a deft compliment from Quince gets round him (I. 2. 88).

XX.

"*Shakespeare's first masterpiece.*"

In *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* "it[1] is not in its dramatic elements that we recognise the master-hand, but rather in the rich and incomparable lyric poetry with which Shakespeare embroiders a thin dramatic canvas. His first masterpiece is a masterpiece of grace, both lyrical and comic. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was no doubt written as a festival-play or masque..... How is one to speak adequately of it? It is idle to dwell upon the slightness of the characterisation, for the poet's effort is not after characterisation; and the poem as a whole is one of the tenderest, most original, and most perfect Shakespeare ever produced. It is Spenser's fairy-poetry developed and condensed; it is Shelley's spirit-poetry anticipated

[1] From Dr Brandes' *William Shakespeare, A Critical Study* (1898), I. 76, 77.

by more than two centuries. And the airy dream is shot with whimsical parody. The frontiers of Elf-land and Clown-land meet and mingle.

We have here an element of aristocratic distinction in the princely couple, Theseus and Hippolyta, and their court. We have here an element of sprightly burlesque in the artisans' performance of Pyramus and Thisbe, treated with genial irony and divinely felicitous humour. And here, finally, we have the element of supernatural poetry, which soon after flashes forth again in *Romeo and Juliet*, where Mercutio describes the doings of Queen Mab. Puck and Pease-blossom, Cobweb and Mustard-seed—pigmies who hunt the worms in a rosebud, tease bats, chase spiders, and lord it over nightingales—are the actors in an elfin play, a fairy carnival of inimitable mirth and melody, steeped in a midsummer atmosphere of mist-wreaths and flower-scents[1], under the afterglow that lingers through the sultry night. This miracle of happy inspiration contains the germs of innumerable romantic achievements in England, Germany, and Denmark, more than two centuries later.

We have here no pathos. The hurricane of passion does not as yet sweep through Shakespeare's work. No; it is only the romantic and imaginative side of love that is here displayed"—the "fancy" which idealises its object (v. 1. 10, 11) and in the duke's eyes makes the lover akin to the poet and the madman:

> "Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
> Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
> More than cool reason ever comprehends.
> The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
> Are of imagination all compact."

[1] Dr Brandes remarks on the great number of references in the play to flowers, fruits, animal life. "The rustic and popular element in Shakespeare's genius here appears more prominently than ever before. The country-bred youth's whole feeling for and knowledge of nature comes to the surface."

XXI.

The story of the play.

The following is the story of the play in Lambs' *Tales from Shakespeare.* The young student (for whose benefit primarily it is inserted) should note that the *Tale* deals mainly with the fairy-element and strange fortunes of the lovers, and omits the part of the "interlude," and the marriage of Theseus. The *Tale* retains much of the language of the play, and a good many of the words in it are explained in the Notes. See the Index for them.

There was a law in the city of Athens which gave to its citizens the power of compelling their daughters to marry whomsoever they pleased: for upon a daughter's refusing to marry the man her father had chosen to be her husband, the father was empowered by this law to cause her to be put to death; but as fathers do not often desire the death of their own daughters, even though they do happen to prove a little refractory, the law was seldom or never put in execution, though perhaps the young ladies of that city were not unfrequently threatened by their parents with the terrors of it.

There was one instance, however, of an old man, whose name was Egeus, who actually did come before Theseus (at that time the reigning duke of Athens), to complain that his daughter Hermia, whom he had commanded to marry Demetrius, a young man of a noble Athenian family, refused to obey him, because she loved another young Athenian, named Lysander. Egeus demanded justice of Theseus, and desired that the cruel law might be put in force against his daughter.

Hermia pleaded in excuse for her disobedience, that Demetrius had formerly professed love for her dear friend Helena, and that Helena loved Demetrius to distraction; but this honourable reason, which Hermia gave for not obeying her father's command, moved not the stern Egeus.

Theseus, though a great and merciful prince, had no power to alter the laws of his country; therefore he could only give Hermia four days to consider of it: and at the end of that time, if she still refused to marry Demetrius, she was to be put to death.

When Hermia was dismissed from the presence of the duke, she went to her lover Lysander, and told him the peril she was in, and that she must either give him up and marry Demetrius, or lose her life in four days.

Lysander was in great affliction at hearing these evil tidings; but recollecting that he had an aunt who lived at some distance from Athens, and that at the place where she lived the cruel law could not be put in force against Hermia (this law not extending beyond the boundaries of the city), he proposed to Hermia that she should steal out of her father's house that night, and go with him to his aunt's house, where he would marry her. "I will meet you," said Lysander, "in the wood a few miles without the city; in that delightful wood where we have so often walked with Helena in the pleasant month of May."

To this proposal Hermia joyfully agreed; and she told no one of her intended flight but her friend Helena. Helena (as maidens will do foolish things for love) very ungenerously resolved to go and tell this to Demetrius, though she could hope no benefit from betraying her friend's secret, but the poor pleasure of following her faithless lover to the wood; for she well knew that Demetrius would go thither in pursuit of Hermia.

The wood, in which Lysander and Hermia proposed to meet, was the favourite haunt of those little beings known by the name of *Fairies*.

Oberon the king, and Titania the queen, of the fairies, with

all their tiny train of followers, in this wood held their midnight revels.

Between this little king and queen of sprites there happened, at this time, a sad disagreement; they never met by moonlight in the shady walks of this pleasant wood, but they were quarrelling, till all their fairy elves would creep into acorn-cups and hide themselves for fear.

The cause of this unhappy disagreement was Titania's refusing to give Oberon a little changeling boy, whose mother had been Titania's friend; and upon her death the fairy queen stole the child from its nurse, and brought him up in the woods.

The night on which the lovers were to meet in this wood, as Titania was walking with some of her maids of honour, she met Oberon attended by his train of fairy courtiers.

"Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania," said the fairy king. The queen replied, "What, jealous Oberon, is it you? Fairies, skip hence; I have forsworn his company." "Tarry, rash fairy," said Oberon; "am not I thy lord? Why does Titania cross her Oberon? Give me your little changeling boy to be my page."

"Set your heart at rest," answered the queen; "your whole fairy kingdom buys not the boy of me." She then left her lord in great anger. "Well, go your way," said Oberon: "before the morning dawns I will torment you for this injury."

Oberon then sent for Puck, his chief favourite and privy counsellor.

Puck (or as he was sometimes called, Robin Goodfellow) was a shrewd and knavish sprite, that used to play comical pranks in the neighbouring villages; sometimes getting into the dairies and skimming the milk, sometimes plunging his light and airy form into the butter-churn, and while he was dancing his fantastic shape in the churn, in vain the dairy-maid would labour to change her cream into butter: nor had the village swains any better success; whenever Puck chose to play his freaks in the brewing copper, the ale was sure to be spoiled.

When a few good neighbours were met to drink some comfortable ale together, Puck would jump into the bowl of ale in the likeness of a roasted crab, and when some old goody was going to drink, he would bob against her lips, and spill the ale over her withered chin; and presently after, when the same old dame was gravely seating herself to tell her neighbours a sad and melancholy story, Puck would slip her three-legged stool from under her, and down toppled the poor old woman, and then the old gossips would hold their sides and laugh at her, and swear they never wasted a merrier hour.

"Come hither, Puck," said Oberon to this little merry wanderer of the night; "fetch me the flower which maids call *Love in Idleness*; the juice of that little purple flower laid on the eyelids of those who sleep, will make them, when they awake, dote on the first thing they see. Some of the juice of that flower I will drop on the eyelids of my Titania when she is asleep; and the first thing she looks upon when she opens her eyes she will fall in love with, even though it be a lion or a bear, a meddling monkey, or a busy ape; and before I will take this charm from off her sight, which I can do with another charm I know of, I will make her give me that boy to be my page."

Puck, who loved mischief to his heart, was highly diverted with this intended frolic of his master, and ran to seek the flower; and while Oberon was waiting the return of Puck, he observed Demetrius and Helena enter the wood: he overheard Demetrius reproaching Helena for following him, and after many unkind words on his part, and gentle expostulations from Helena, reminding him of his former love and professions of true faith to her, he left her (as he said) to the mercy of the wild beasts, and she ran after him as swiftly as she could.

The fairy king, who was always friendly to true lovers, felt great compassion for Helena; and perhaps, as Lysander said they used to walk by moonlight in this pleasant wood, Oberon might have seen Helena in those happy times when she was beloved by Demetrius. However that might be, when Puck

returned with the little purple flower, Oberon said to his favourite, "Take a part of this flower: there has been a sweet Athenian lady here, who is in love with a disdainful youth; if you find him sleeping, drop some of the love-juice in his eyes, but contrive to do it when she is near him, that the first thing he sees when he awakes may be this despised lady. You will know the man by the Athenian garments which he wears." Puck promised to manage this matter very dexterously: and then Oberon went, unperceived by Titania, to her bower, where she was preparing to go to rest. Her fairy bower was a bank, where grew wild thyme, cowslips, and sweet violets, under a canopy of wood-bine, musk-roses, and eglantine. There Titania always slept some part of the night; her coverlet the enamelled skin of a snake, which, though a small mantle, was wide enough to wrap a fairy in.

He found Titania giving orders to her fairies, how they were to employ themselves while she slept. "Some of you," said her majesty, "must kill cankers in the musk-rose buds, and some wage war with the bats for their leathern wings, to make my small elves coats; and some of you keep watch that the clamorous owl, that nightly hoots, come not near me: but first sing me to sleep." Then they began to sing this song:—

"You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms do no wrong,
Come not near our Fairy Queen.
Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby;
Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So good night with lullaby."

When the fairies had sung their queen asleep with this pretty lullaby, they left her to perform the important services she had enjoined them. Oberon then softly drew near his

Titania, and dropped some of the love-juice on her eyelids, saying,—

"What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true-love take."

But to return to Hermia, who made her escape out of her father's house that night, to avoid the death she was doomed to for refusing to marry Demetrius. When she entered the wood, she found her dear Lysander waiting for her, to conduct her to his aunt's house; but before they had passed half through the wood, Hermia was so much fatigued, that Lysander, who was very careful of this dear lady, who had proved her affection for him even by hazarding her life for his sake, persuaded her to rest till morning on a bank of soft moss, and lying down himself on the ground at some little distance, they soon fell fast asleep. Here they were found by Puck, who seeing a handsome young man asleep, and perceiving that his clothes were made in the Athenian fashion, and that a pretty lady was sleeping near him, concluded that this must be the Athenian maid and her disdainful lover whom Oberon had sent him to seek; and he naturally enough conjectured that, as they were alone together, she must be the first thing he would see when he awoke; so, without more ado, he proceeded to pour some of the juice of the little purple flower into his eyes. But it so fell out, that Helena came that way, and, instead of Hermia, was the first object Lysander beheld when he opened his eyes; and, strange to relate, so powerful was the love-charm, all his love for Hermia vanished away, and Lysander fell in love with Helena.

Had he first seen Hermia when he awoke, the blunder Puck committed would have been of no consequence, for he could not love that faithful lady too well; but for poor Lysander to be forced by a fairy love-charm to forget his own true Hermia, and to run after another lady, and leave Hermia asleep quite alone in a wood at midnight, was a sad chance indeed.

Thus this misfortune happened. Helena, as has been before related, endeavoured to keep pace with Demetrius when he ran

away so rudely from her; but she could not continue this unequal race long, men being always better runners in a long race than ladies. Helena soon lost sight of Demetrius; and as she was wandering about, dejected and forlorn, she arrived at the place where Lysander was sleeping. "Ah!" said she, "this is Lysander lying on the ground: is he dead or asleep?" Then, gently touching him, she said, "Good sir, if you are alive, awake." Upon this Lysander opened his eyes, and (the love-charm beginning to work) immediately addressed her in terms of extravagant love and admiration; telling her she as much excelled Hermia in beauty as a dove does a raven, and that he would run through fire for her sweet sake; and many more such lover-like speeches. Helena, knowing Lysander was her friend Hermia's lover, and that he was solemnly engaged to marry her, was in the utmost rage when she heard herself addressed in this manner; for she thought (as well she might) that Lysander was making a jest of her. "Oh!" said she, "why was I born to be mocked and scorned by every one? Is it not enough, is it not enough, young man, that I can never get a sweet look or a kind word from Demetrius; but you, sir, must pretend in this disdainful manner to court me? I thought, Lysander, you were a lord of more true gentleness." Saying these words in great anger, she ran away; and Lysander followed her, quite forgetful of his own Hermia, who was still asleep.

When Hermia awoke, she was in a sad fright at finding herself alone. She wandered about the wood, not knowing what was become of Lysander, or which way to go to seek for him. In the mean time Demetrius, not being able to find Hermia and his rival Lysander, and fatigued with his fruitless search, was observed by Oberon fast asleep. Oberon had learnt by some questions he had asked of Puck, that he had applied the love-charm to the wrong person's eyes; and now, having found the person first intended, he touched the eyelids of the sleeping Demetrius with the love-juice, and he instantly awoke; and the first thing he saw being Helena, he, as Lysander

had done before, began to address love-speeches to her; and just at that moment Lysander, followed by Hermia (for through Puck's unlucky mistake it was now become Hermia's turn to run after her lover) made his appearance; and then Lysander and Demetrius, both speaking together, made love to Helena, they being each one under the influence of the same potent charm.

The astonished Helena thought that Demetrius, Lysander, and her once dear friend Hermia, were all in a plot together to make a jest of her.

Hermia was as much surprised as Helena: she knew not why Lysander and Demetrius, who both before loved her, were now become the lovers of Helena; and to Hermia the matter seemed to be no jest.

The ladies, who before had always been the dearest of friends, now fell to high words together.

"Unkind Hermia," said Helena, "it is you have set Lysander on to vex me with mock praises; and your other lover Demetrius, who used almost to spurn me with his foot, have you not bid him call me Goddess, Nymph, rare, precious, and celestial? He would not speak thus to me, whom he hates, if you did not set him on to make a jest of me. Unkind Hermia, to join with men in scorning your poor friend. Have you forgot our school-day friendship? How often, Hermia, have we two, sitting on one cushion, both singing one song, with our needles working the same flower, both on the same sampler wrought; growing up together in fashion of a double cherry, scarcely seeming parted! Hermia, it is not friendly in you, it is not maidenly to join with men in scorning your poor friend."

"I am amazed at your passionate words," said Hermia: "I scorn you not; it seems you scorn me." "Ay, do," returned Helena, "persevere, counterfeit serious looks, and make mouths at me when I turn my back; then wink at each other, and hold the sweet jest up. If you had any pity, grace, or manners, you would not use me thus."

While Helena and Hermia were speaking these angry words

to each other, Demetrius and Lysander left them, to fight together in the wood for the love of Helena.

When they found the gentlemen had left them, they departed, and once more wandered weary in the wood in search of their lovers.

As soon as they were gone, the fairy king, who with little Puck had been listening to their quarrels, said to him, "This is your negligence, Puck; or did you do this wilfully?" "Believe me, king of shadows," answered Puck, "it was a mistake: did not you tell me I should know the man by his Athenian garments? However, I am not sorry this has happened, for I think their jangling makes excellent sport." "You heard," said Oberon, "that Demetrius and Lysander are gone to seek a convenient place to fight in. I command you to overhang the night with a thick fog, and lead these quarrelsome lovers so astray in the dark, that they shall not be able to find each other. Counterfeit each of their voices to the other, and with bitter taunts provoke them to follow you, while they think it is their rival's tongue they hear. See you do this, till they are so weary they can go no farther; and when you find they are asleep, drop the juice of this other flower into Lysander's eyes, and when he awakes he will forget his new love for Helena, and return to his old passion for Hermia; and then the two fair ladies may each one be happy with the man she loves, and they will think all that has passed a vexatious dream. About this quickly, Puck; and I will go and see what sweet love my Titania has found."

Titania was still sleeping, and Oberon seeing a clown near her, who had lost his way in the wood, and was likewise asleep: "This fellow," said he, "shall be my Titania's true love"; and clapping an ass's head over the clown's, it seemed to fit him as well as if it had grown upon his own shoulders. Though Oberon fixed the ass's head on very gently, it awakened him, and rising up, unconscious of what Oberon had done to him, he went towards the bower where the fairy queen slept.

"Ah! what angel is that I see?" said Titania, opening her

eyes, and the juice of the little purple flower beginning to take effect: "are you as wise as you are beautiful?"

"Why, mistress," said the foolish clown, "if I have wit enough to find the way out of this wood, I have enough to serve my turn."

"Out of the wood do not desire to go," said the enamoured queen. "I am a spirit of no common rate. I love you. Go with me, and I will give you fairies to attend upon you."

She then called four of her fairies: their names were Pease-blossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed.

"Attend," said the queen, "upon this sweet gentleman; hop in his walks, and gambol in his sight; feed him with grapes and apricots, and steal for him the honey-bags from the bees. Come, sit with me," said she to the clown, "and let me play with your amiable hairy cheeks, my beautiful ass! and kiss your fair large ears, my gentle joy!"

"Where is Pease-blossom?" said the ass-headed clown, not much regarding the fairy queen's courtship, but very proud of his new attendants.

"Here, sir," said little Pease-blossom.

"Scratch my head," said the clown. "Where is Cobweb?"

"Here, sir," said Cobweb.

"Good Mr. Cobweb," said the foolish clown, "kill me the red humble-bee on the top of that thistle yonder; and, good Mr. Cobweb, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, Mr. Cobweb, and take care the honey-bag break not; I should be sorry to have you overflown with a honey-bag. Where is Mustard-seed?"

"Here, sir," said Mustard-seed: "what is your will?"

"Nothing," said the clown, "good Mr. Mustard-seed, but to help Mr. Pease-blossom to scratch: I must go to a barber's, Mr. Mustard-seed, for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face."

"My sweet love," said the queen, "what will you have to eat? I have a venturous fairy shall seek the squirrel's hoard, and fetch you some new nuts."

"I had rather have a handful of dried pease," said the clown, who with his ass's head had got an ass's appetite. "But, I pray, let none of your people disturb me, for I have a mind to sleep."

"Sleep, then," said the queen, "and I will wind you in my arms. O how I love you! how I dote upon you!"

When the fairy king saw the clown sleeping in the arms of his queen, he advanced within her sight, and reproached her with having lavished her favours upon an ass.

This she could not deny, as the clown was then sleeping within her arms, with his ass's head crowned by her with flowers.

When Oberon had teased her for some time, he again demanded the changeling-boy; which she, ashamed of being discovered by her lord with her new favourite, did not dare to refuse him.

Oberon, having thus obtained the little boy he had so long wished for to be his page, took pity on the disgraceful situation into which, by his merry contrivance, he had brought his Titania, and threw some of the juice of the other flower into her eyes; and the fairy queen immediately recovered her senses, and wondered at her late dotage, saying how she now loathed the sight of the strange monster.

Oberon likewise took the ass's head from off the clown, and left him to finish his nap with his own fool's head upon his shoulders.

Oberon and his Titania being now perfectly reconciled, he related to her the history of the lovers, and their midnight quarrels; and she agreed to go with him and see the end of their adventures.

The fairy king and queen found the lovers and their fair ladies, at no great distance from each other, sleeping on a grass-plot; for Puck, to make amends for his former mistake, had contrived with the utmost diligence to bring them all to the same spot, unknown to each other; and he had carefully

removed the charm from off the eyes of Lysander with the antidote the fairy king gave to him.

Hermia first awoke, and finding her lost Lysander asleep so near her, was looking at him and wondering at his strange inconstancy. Lysander presently opening his eyes, and seeing his dear Hermia, recovered his reason, which the fairy charm had before clouded, and with his reason, his love for Hermia; and they began to talk over the adventures of the night, doubting if these things had really happened, or if they had both been dreaming the same bewildering dream.

Helena and Demetrius were by this time awake; and a sweet sleep having quieted Helena's disturbed and angry spirits, she listened with delight to the professions of love which Demetrius still made to her, and which, to her surprise as well as pleasure, she began to perceive were sincere.

These fair night-wandering ladies, now no longer rivals, became once more true friends; all the unkind words which had passed were forgiven, and they calmly consulted together what was best to be done in their present situation. It was soon agreed that, as Demetrius had given up his pretensions to Hermia, he should endeavour to prevail upon her father to revoke the cruel sentence of death which had been passed against her. Demetrius was preparing to return to Athens for this friendly purpose, when they were surprised with the sight of Egeus, Hermia's father, who came to the wood in pursuit of his runaway daughter.

When Egeus understood that Demetrius would not now marry his daughter, he no longer opposed her marriage with Lysander, but gave his consent that they should be wedded on the fourth day from that time, being the same day on which Hermia had been condemned to lose her life; and on that same day Helena joyfully agreed to marry her beloved and now faithful Demetrius.

The fairy king and queen, who were invisible spectators of this reconciliation, and now saw the happy ending of the lovers'

history, brought about through the good offices of Oberon, received so much pleasure, that these kind spirits resolved to celebrate the approaching nuptials with sports and revels throughout their fairy kingdom.

And now, if any are offended with this story of fairies and their pranks, as judging it incredible and strange, they have only to think that they have been asleep and dreaming, and that all these adventures were visions which they saw in their sleep: and I hope none of my readers will be so unreasonable as to be offended with a pretty harmless Midsummer Night's Dream.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THESEUS, duke of Athens.
EGEUS, father to Hermia.
LYSANDER, } in love with Hermia.
DEMETRIUS, }
PHILOSTRATE, master of the revels to Theseus.
QUINCE, a carpenter.
SNUG, a joiner.
BOTTOM, a weaver.
FLUTE, a bellows-mender.
SNOUT, a tinker.
STARVELING, a tailor.

HIPPOLYTA, queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.
HERMIA, daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander.
HELENA, in love with Demetrius.

OBERON, king of the fairies.
TITANIA, queen of the fairies.
PUCK, or Robin Goodfellow.
PEASE-BLOSSOM, }
COBWEB, }
MOTH, } fairies.
MUSTARD-SEED, }

PYRAMUS, }
THISBE, }
WALL, }
MOONSHINE, } characters in the interlude performed by the Clowns.
LION, }

Other fairies attending their King and Queen. Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta.

SCENE—*Athens, and a wood near it.*

A

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Athens. The palace of* THESEUS.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, *and* Attendants.

The. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

Hip. Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

The. Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth:
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
The pale companion is not for our pomp. [*Exit Philostrate.*
Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,

And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, *and* DEMETRIUS.

Ege. Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!
The. Thanks, good Egeus: what's the news with thee?
Ege. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander: and, my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child:
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchang'd love-tokens with my child:
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
With feigning voice, verses of feigning love;
And stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats,—messengers
Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth:
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart;
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,
Be it so she will not here before your Grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.
The. What say you, Hermia? be advis'd, fair maid:

To you your father should be as a god;
One that compos'd your beauties; yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax
By him imprinted, and within his power
To leave the figure, or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.
Her. So is Lysander.
The. In himself he is;
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.
Her. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.
The. Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.
Her. I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty,
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
But I beseech your Grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.
The. Either to die the death, or to abjure
For ever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
You can endure the livery of a nun;
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

Her. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.
The. Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon,—
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
For everlasting bond of fellowship,—
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye austerity and single life.
Dem. Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazed title to my certain right.
Lys. You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.
Ege. Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him;
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.
Lys. I am, my lord, as well deriv'd as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
I am belov'd of beauteous Hermia:
Why should not I, then, prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.
The. I must confess that I have heard so much,

And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being over-full of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up—
Which by no means we may extenuate—
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along:
I must employ you in some business
Against our nuptial; and confer with you
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

Ege. With duty and desire we follow you.

[*Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia.*

Lys. How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

Her. Belike for want of rain, which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of mine eyes.

Lys. Ay me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood,—

Her. O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low!

Lys. Or else misgraffed in respect of years,—

Her. O spite! too old to be engag'd to young!

Lys. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends,—

Her. O hell! to choose love by another's eyes!

Lys. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentany as a sound,

Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say, "Behold!"
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.

Her. If, then, true lovers have been ever cross'd,
It stands as an edict in destiny:
Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts, and dreams, and sighs,
Wishes, and tears, poor fancy's followers.

Lys. A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child:
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lov'st me, then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
To do observance to a morn of May,
There will I stay for thee.

Her. My good Lysander!
I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow;
By his best arrow with the golden head;
By the simplicity of Venus' doves;
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves;
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
When the false Trojan under sail was seen;
By all the vows that ever men have broke,

In number more than ever women spoke;
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lys. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA.

Her. God speed fair Helena! whither away? 180

Hel. Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn-buds appear.
Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia! ere I go,
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated, 190
The rest I'll give to be to you translated.
O, teach me how you look; and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!

Her. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

Hel. O, that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

Her. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

Hel. O, that my prayers could such affection move!

Her. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

Hel. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

Her. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine. 200

Hel. None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

Her. Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.
Before the time I did Lysander see,
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:

O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,
That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

Lys. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:
To-morrow night, when Phœbe doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,—
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,—
Through Athens' gates have we devis'd to steal.

Her. And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us;
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

Lys. I will, my Hermia. [*Exit Hermia.*
Helena, adieu:
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you! [*Exit.*

Hel. How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know:
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities.
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity:
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste;
Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste:

And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguil'd.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjur'd every where:
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolv'd, and showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *Athens.* QUINCE'S *house.*

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING.

Quin. Is all our company here?

Bot. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

Quin. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess on his wedding-day at night.

Bot. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

Quin. Marry, our play is *The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.*

Bot. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

Quin. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bot. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quin. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bot. What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant? 24

Quin. A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

Bot. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

> The raging rocks
> And shivering shocks
> Shall break the locks
> Of prison-gates;
> And Phibbus' car
> Shall shine from far,
> And make and mar
> The foolish Fates. 40

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

Quin. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

Flu. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You must take Thisby on you.

Flu. What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

Quin. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

Flu. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming. 50

Quin. That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Bot. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too: I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, "Thisne, Thisne;" "Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!"

Quin. No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

Bot. Well, proceed.

Quin. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

Star. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.

Snout. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You, Pyramus' father; myself, Thisby's father; Snug, the joiner, you, the lion's part: and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quin. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot. Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say, "Let him roar again, let him roar again."

Quin. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

All. That would hang us, every mother's son.

Bot. I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

Quin. You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely, gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus. 91

Bot. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

Quin. Why, what you will.

Bot. I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

Quin. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace-wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight: there will we rehearse,—for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the mean time I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not. 109

Bot. We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

Quin. At the duke's oak we meet.

Bot. Enough; hold, or cut bow-strings. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A wood near Athens.*

Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy, *and* PUCK.

Puck. How now, spirit! whither wander you?

Fai. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be:
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone:
Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

Puck. The king doth keep his revels here to-night:
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she, as her attendant, hath
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling:
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild;
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy:

And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear or spangled starlight sheen,
But they do square, that all their elves, for fear,
Creep into acorn-cups, and hide them there.

Fai. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
Are not you he?

Puck. Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab;
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob,
And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;
Then slip I from her, [and] down topples she,
And "tailor" cries, and falls into a cough;
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

Fai. And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

Enter, from one side, OBERON, *with his Train; from the other,* TITANIA, *with hers.*

Obe. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.
Tita. What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:
I have forsworn his bed and company.
Obe. Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?
Tita. Then I must be thy lady: but I know
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love
To amorous Phyllida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steep of India?
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.
Obe. How canst thou thus, for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia?
And make him with fair Æglé break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa?
Tita. These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea

Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land,
Have every pelting river made so proud,
That they have overborne their continents:
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat; and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard:
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud;
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,
For lack of tread, are undistinguishable:
The human mortals want their winter here;
No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound:
And thorough this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose;
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries; and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which:
And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension;
We are their parents and original.

Obe. Do you amend it, then; it lies in you:
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.

Tita. Set your heart at rest:

The fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order:
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side;
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking the embarked traders on the flood;
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
Which she with pretty and with swimming gait
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
And for her sake I do rear up her boy;
And for her sake I will not part with him.

Oberon. How long within this wood intend you stay?

Tita. Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
If you will patiently dance in our round,
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

Obe. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

Tita. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

[*Exit Titania with her Train.*

Obe. Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou remember'st
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,

To hear the sea-maid's music.

Puck. I remember.

Obe. That very time I saw—but thou couldst not—
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I show'd thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

Puck. I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes. [*Exit.*

Obe. Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing then she waking looks upon,
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey or on busy ape,
She shall pursue it with the soul of love:
And ere I take this charm off from her sight,—
As I can take it with another herb,—

I'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here? I am invisible;
And I will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA *following him.*

Dem. I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stolen into this wood;
And here am I, and wood within this wood,
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.
Hel. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you.
Dem. Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you I do not nor I cannot love you?
Hel. And even for that do I love you the more.
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
What worser place can I beg in your love,—
And yet a place of high respect with me,—
Than to be used as you use your dog?
Dem. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;
For I am sick when I do look on thee.
Hel. And I am sick when I look not on you.
Dem. You do impeach your modesty too much,
To leave the city, and commit yourself

Into the hands of one that loves you not;
To trust the opportunity of night,
And the ill counsel of a desert place,
With the rich worth of your virginity.

Hel. Your virtue is my privilege: for that
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night;
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you in my respect are all the world:
Then how can it be said I am alone,
When all the world is here to look on me?

Dem. I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

Hel. The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
Run when you will, the story shall be chang'd:
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind
Makes speed to catch the tiger,—bootless speed,
When cowardice pursues, and valour flies!

Dem. I will not stay thy questions; let me go:
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

Hel. Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo.

[*Exit Demetrius.*

I'll follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well. [*Exit.*

Obe. Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.

Re-enter PUCK.

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer

Puck. Ay, there it is.

Obe. I pray thee, give it me.
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where ox-lips and the nodding violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love:
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

Puck. Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another part of the wood.*

Enter TITANIA, *with her Train.*

Tita. Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;

Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds;
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,
To make my small elves coats; and some keep back
The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices, and let me rest.

SONG.

First Fairy. You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

CHORUS.

Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby:
Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good night, with lullaby.

Second Fairy. Weaving spiders come not here;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.

CHORUS.

Philomel, with melody, &c.

First Fairy. Hence, away! now all is well:
One aloof stand sentinel.

[*Exeunt Fairies. Titania sleeps.*

Enter OBERON.

Obe. What thou see'st when thou dost wake,

[*Squeezes the flower on Titania's eyelids.*

Do it for thy true-love take;
Love and languish for his sake:
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear:
Wake when some vile thing is near. [*Exit.*

Enter LYSANDER *and* HERMIA.

Lys. Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;
And, to speak troth, I have forgot our way:
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.
Her. Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;
For I upon this bank will rest my head.
Lys. One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;
One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.
Her. Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,
Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.
Lys. O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.
I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit,
So that but one heart we can make of it:
Two bosoms interchained with an oath;
So then two bosoms and a single troth.
Then by your side no bed-room me deny;
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.
Her. Lysander riddles very prettily:
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
Lie further off; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said

Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend:
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

Lys. Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;
And then end life when I end loyalty!
Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

Her. With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd!
[*They sleep.*

Enter PUCK.

Puck. Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none,
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence! who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear:
This is he my master said
Despised the Athenian maid;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul! she durst not lie
Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
[*Squeezes the flower on Lysander's eyelids.*
All the power this charm doth owe.
When thou wak'st, let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
So awake when I am gone;
For I must now to Oberon. [*Exit.*

Enter DEMETRIUS *and* HELENA, *running.*

Hel. Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

Dem. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

Hel. O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.
Dem. Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go. [*Exit.*
Hel. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:
If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.
Lys. [*Starting up*] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!
Hel. Do not say so, Lysander; say not so.
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?
Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.
Lys. Content with Hermia! No; I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hermia but Helena I love:
Who will not change a raven for a dove?
The will of man is by his reason sway'd;
And reason says you are the worthier maid.
Things growing are not ripe until their season:

So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;
And touching now the point of human skill,
Reason becomes the marshal to my will,
And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
Love's stories written in love's richest book.
Hel. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
Is't not enough, is't not enough, young man,
That I did never, no, nor never can,
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
But you must flout my insufficiency?
Good troth, you do me wrong,—good sooth, you do,—
In such disdainful manner me to woo.
But fare you well: perforce I must confess
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
O, that a lady, of one man refus'd,
Should of another therefore be abus'd! [*Exit*
Lys. She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there:
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
For as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings;
Or as the heresies that men do leave
Are hated most of those they did deceive;
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me!
And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen, and to be her knight! [*Exit.*
Her. [*Awaking*] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,

And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
Lysander! what, remov'd? Lysander! lord!
What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
Alack, where are you? speak, an if you hear;
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
No? then I well perceive you are not nigh:
Either death or you I'll find immediately. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The wood. Titania lying asleep.*

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING.

Bot. Are we all met?

Quin. Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the duke.

Bot. Peter Quince,—

Quin. What say'st thou, bully Bottom?

Bot. There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

Snout. By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

Star. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

Bot. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell

them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear.

Quin. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

Bot. No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

Snout. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

Star. I fear it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in,—God shield us!—a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to it.

Snout. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect,—"Ladies,"—or, "Fair ladies,—I would wish you,"—or, "I would request you,"—or, "I would entreat you,—not to fear, not to tremble; my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are:" and there, indeed, let him name his name, and tell them plainly, he is Snug the joiner.

Quin. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things,—that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

Snug. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

Bot. A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanac; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

Quin. Yes, it doth shine that night.

Bot. Why, then may you leave a casement of the

great chamber window, where we play, open, and the moon may shine in at the casement.

Quin. Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lanthorn, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine. Then, there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

Snug. You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom?

Bot. Some man or other must present Wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

Quin. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin; when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake; and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK *behind.*

Puck. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;
An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

Quin. Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

Pyr. Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet,—

Quin. "Odours, odours."

Pyr. —— odours savours sweet:
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.
But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear. [*Exit.*

Puck. A stranger Pyramus than e'er play'd here. [*Aside, and exit.*

This. Must I speak now?

Quin. Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

This. Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

Quin. "Ninus' tomb," man: why, you must not speak that yet; that you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus, enter: your cue is past; it is, "never tire."

This. O,—As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.

Re-enter PUCK, *and* BOTTOM *with an ass's head.*

Pyr. If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine:—

Quin. O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted. Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!

[*Exeunt Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.*

Puck. I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn. [*Exit.*

Bot. Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to make me afeard.

Re-enter SNOUT.

Snout. O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?

Bot. What do you see? you see an ass-head of your own, do you? [*Exit Snout.*

Re-enter QUINCE.

Quin. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated. [*Exit.*

Bot. I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid. [*Sings.*

The ousel-cock so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill,—

Tita. [*Awaking*] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

Bot. [*Sings*]

The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay;—

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry "cuckoo" never so?

Tita. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me,
On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.

Bot. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days; the more the pity that some honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

Tita. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

Bot. Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

Tita. Out of this wood do not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate:
The summer still doth tend upon my state;
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee;
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing, while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep:
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Pease-blossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustard-seed!

Enter PEASE-BLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, *and* MUSTARD-SEED.

Peas. Ready.

Cob. And I.

Moth. And I.

Mus. And I.

All Four. Where shall we go?

Tita. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed and to arise;
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

Peas. Hail, mortal!

Cob. Hail!

Moth. Hail! 180

Mus. Hail!

Bot. I cry your worships mercy, heartily. I beseech your worship's name.

Cob. Cobweb.

Bot. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman?

Peas. Pease-blossom.

Bot. I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Pease-blossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

Mus. Mustard-seed.

Bot. Good Master Mustard-seed, I know your patience well: that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house: I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Mustard-seed. 201

Tita. Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.
The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.
Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another part of the wood.*

Enter OBERON.

Obe. I wonder if Titania be awak'd;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.
Here comes my messenger.

Enter PUCK.

How now, mad spirit!
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

Puck. My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play,
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.
The shallowest thickskin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented in their sport,
Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a brake:
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nole I fixed on his head:
Anon his Thisbe must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky;
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
He murder cries, and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;
Some, sleeves,—some, hats;—from yielders all things catch.
I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there:
When in that moment, so it came to pass,
Titania wak'd, and straightway lov'd an ass.

Obe. This falls out better than I could devise.
But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?
Puck. I took him sleeping,—that is finish'd too,—
And the Athenian woman by his side;
That, when he wak'd, of force she must be ey'd.

Enter HERMIA *and* DEMETRIUS.

Obe. Stand close: this is the same Athenian.
Puck. This is the woman, but not this the man.
Dem. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.
Her. Now I but chide; but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me: would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bor'd; and that the moon
May through the centre creep, and so displease
Her brother's noontide with the Antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;
So should a murderer look,—so dead, so grim.
Dem. So should the murder'd look; and so should I,
Pierc'd through the heart with your stern cruelty:
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.
Her. What's this to my Lysander? where is he?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?
Dem. I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.
Her. Out, dog! out, cur! thou driv'st me past the bounds

Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never number'd among men!
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
An adder did it; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

Dem. You spend your passion on a mispris'd mood:
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

Her. I pray thee, tell me, then, that he is well.

Dem. An if I could, what should I get therefore?

Her. A privilege, never to see me more;
And from thy hated presence part I so:
See me no more, whether he be dead or no. [*Exit.*

Dem. There is no following her in this fierce vein:
Here therefore for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe;
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Obe. What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite,
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
Some true love turn'd, and not a false turn'd true.

Puck. Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

Obe. About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find:
All fancy-sick she is, and pale of cheer
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear:

By some illusion see thou bring her here:
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.
Puck. I go, I go; look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow. [*Exit.*
Obe. Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
[*Squeezes the flower on Demetrius's eyelids.*
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wak'st, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter PUCK.

Puck. Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand;
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!
Obe. Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.
Puck. Then will two at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone;
And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously.

Enter HELENA *and* LYSANDER.

Lys. Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never come in tears:
Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.

How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?
Hel. You do advance your cunning more and more.
When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!
These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
Will even weigh; and both as light as tales.
Lys. I had no judgment when to her I swore.
Hel. Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.
Lys. Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.
Dem. [*Awaking*] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow
When thou hold'st up thy hand: O, let me kiss
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!
Hel. O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment:
If you were civil and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so;
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia;
And now both rivals, to mock Helena:
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,

To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision! none of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin, and extort
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.
Lys. You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia; this you know I know:
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love, and will do till my death.
Hel. Never did mockers waste more idle breath.
Dem. Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:
If e'er I lov'd her, all that love is gone.
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
And now to Helen is it home return'd,
There to remain.
Lys. Helen, it is not so.
Dem. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter HERMIA.

Her. Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompense.
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?
Lys. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?
Her. What love could press Lysander from my side?
Lys. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night

Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,
The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?
Her. You speak not as you think: it cannot be.
Hel. Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us,—O, is all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key;
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet a union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.
Her. I am amazed at your passionate words.

I scorn you not: it seems that you scorn me.
Hel. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn
To follow me, and praise my eyes and face?
And made your other love, Demetrius,
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,
To call me goddess, nymph, divine, and rare,
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent?
What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
But miserable most, to love unlov'd?
This you should pity rather than despise.
Her. I understand not what you mean by this.
Hel. Ay, do, persever, counterfeit sad looks;
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But fare ye well: 'tis partly mine own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.
Lys. Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!
Hel. O excellent!
Her. Sweet, do not scorn her so.
Dem. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.
Lys. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.
Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do:
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,

To prove him false that says I love thee not.

Dem. I say I love thee more than he can do.

Lys. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

Dem. Quick, come!

Her. Lysander, whereto tends all this?

Lys. Away, you Ethiop!

Dem. No, no, sir;
Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,
But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

Lys. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose,
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!

Her. Why are you grown so rude? what change is this,
Sweet love?

Lys. Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!
Out, loathèd medicine! hated potion, hence!

Her. Do you not jest?

Hel. Yes, sooth! and so do you.

Lys. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

Dem. I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you: I'll not trust your word.

Lys. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

Her. What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love?
Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you lov'd me; yet since night you left me:
Why, then you left me,—O, the gods forbid!—
In earnest, shall I say?

Lys. Ay, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;

Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee, and love Helena.
Her. O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?
Hel. Fine, i'faith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!
Her. Puppet! why so? ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urg'd her height;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.
Hel. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me: I was never curst;
I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid for my cowardice:
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she's something lower than myself,
That I can match her.
Her. Lower! hark, again.
Hel. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.

He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
But he hath chid me hence, and threaten'd me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back,
And follow you no further: let me go:
You see how simple and how fond I am.

Her. Why, get you gone: who is't that hinders you?

Hel. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

Her. What, with Lysander?

Hel. With Demetrius.

Lys. Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

Dem. No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

Hel. O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd!
She was a vixen when she went to school;
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

Her. Little again! nothing but low and little!
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.

Lys. Get you gone, you dwarf;
You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;
You bead, you acorn.

Dem. You are too officious
In her behalf that scorns your services.
Let her alone: speak not of Helena;
Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend
Never so little show of love to her,
Thou shalt aby it.

Lys. Now she holds me not;
Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

Dem. Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jole.

[*Exeunt Lysander and Demetrius.*

Her. You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:
Nay, go not back.
Hel. I will not trust you, I,
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray;
My legs are longer though, to run away. [*Exit.*
Her. I am amaz'd, and know not what to say. [*Exit.*
Obe. This is thy negligence: still thou mistak'st,
Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.
Puck. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garments he had on?
And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort,
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.
Obe. Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog, as black as Acheron;
And lead these testy rivals so astray,
As one come not within another's way.
Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;
And from each other look thou lead them thus,
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
To take from thence all error with his might,
And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
When they next wake, all this derision

Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision,
And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,
With league whose date till death shall never end.
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

Puck. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For Night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,
That in crossways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone;
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
They wilfully themselves exile from light,
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

Obe. But we are spirits of another sort:
I with the Morning's love have oft made sport;
And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt-green streams.
But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:
We may effect this business yet ere day. [*Exit.*

Puck. Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd in field and town:
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one.

Re-enter LYSANDER.

Lys. Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

Puck. Here, villain, drawn and ready. Where art thou?
Lys. I will be with thee straight.
Puck. Follow me, then,
To plainer ground. [*Exit Lysander, as following the voice.*

Re-enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. Lysander! speak again:
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?
Puck. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;
I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defil'd
That draws a sword on thee.
Dem. Yea, art thou there?
Puck. Follow my voice: we'll try no manhood here.
[*Exeunt.*

Re-enter LYSANDER.

Lys. He goes before me and still dares me on:
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;
That fall'n am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me. [*Lies down.*] Come, thou gentle day!
For if but once thou show me thy gray light,
I'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite. [*Sleeps.*

Re-enter PUCK *and* DEMETRIUS.

Puck. Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why com'st thou not?
Dem. Abide me, if thou dar'st; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,

And dar'st not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

Puck. Come hither: I am here.

Dem. Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see:
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Re-enter HELENA.

Hel. O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours! Shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest:
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Puck. Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds makes up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:
Cupid is a knavish lad,
Thus to make poor females mad.

Re-enter HERMIA.

Her. Never so weary, never so in woe;
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briers;
I can no further crawl, no further go;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Puck. On the ground
Sleep sound:
I'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.
[*Squeezing the herb on Lysander's eyelids.*
When thou wak'st,
Thou tak'st
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown:
Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.
[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *The wood.* LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, *and* HERMIA, *lying asleep.*

Enter TITANIA *and* BOTTOM; PEASE-BLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARD-SEED, *and other* Fairies *attending;* OBERON *behind unseen.*

Tita. Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.
Bot. Where's Pease-blossom?
Peas. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head, Pease-blossom. Where's Mounsieur Cobweb?

Cob. Ready.

Bot. Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, mounsieur; and, good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; I would be loth to have you overflown with a honey-bag, signior. Where's Mounsieur Mustard-seed?

Mus. Ready.

Bot. Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustard-seed. Pray you, leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

Mus. What's your will?

Bot. Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

Tita. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love? 30

Bot. I have a reasonable good ear in music: let's have the tongs and the bones. [*Rough music.*

Tita. Or say, sweet love, what thou desir'st to eat.

Bot. Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay hath no fellow.

Tita. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts. 40

Bot. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

Tita. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms. Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away. [*Exeunt Fairies.*
So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle

Gently entwist; the female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee! [*They sleep.*

Enter PUCK.

Obe. [*Advancing*] Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her, and fall out with her;
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell, like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes,
Like tears, that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain;
That, he awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents,
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.
Be as thou wast wont to be;

[*Touching her eyes with an herb.*

See as thou wast wont to see:
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessed power.
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.
Tita. My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.
Obe. There lies your love.
Tita. How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!
Obe. Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.
Titania, music call; and strike more dead
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.
Tita. Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep!
[*Music, still.*
Puck. Now, when thou wak'st, with thine own fool's eyes peep.
Obe. Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair prosperity:
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.
Puck. Fairy king, attend, and mark:
I do hear the morning lark.
Obe. Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after the night's shade:
We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.
Tita. Come, my lord; and in our flight,
Tell me how it came this night,

That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground. [*Exeunt.*

[*Horns winded within.*

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, *and Train.*

The. Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds:
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go:
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester. [*Exit an Attend.*
We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Hip. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

The. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:
Judge when you hear. But, soft! what nymphs are these?

Ege. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:

I wonder of their being here together.

The. No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May; and, hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity.
But speak, Egeus; is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

Ege. It is, my lord.

The. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

[*Horns and shout within. Lysander, Demetrius, Helena, and Hermia awake and start up.*

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

Lys. Pardon, my lord.

The. I pray you all, stand up.
I know you two are rival enemies:
How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is so far from jealousy,
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

Lys. My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,
I cannot truly say how I came here;
But, as I think,—for truly would I speak,
And now I do bethink me, so it is,—
I came with Hermia hither: our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
Without the peril of the Athenian law,—

Ege. Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:
I beg the law, the law, upon his head.
They would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me,
You of your wife, and me of my consent,
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

Dem. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,

Of this their purpose hither to this wood;
And I in fury hither follow'd them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,—
But by some power it is,—my love to Hermia,
Melted as the snow, seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud,
Which in my childhood I did dote upon;
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object, and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:
But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food;
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now do I wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.

The. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will;
For in the temple, by and by, with us
These couples shall eternally be knit:
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purpos'd hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens! three and three
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta. [*Exeunt The., Hip., Ege., and Train.*

Dem. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

Her. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.

Hel. So methinks:
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
Mine own, and not mine own.

Dem. Are you sure
That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?
Her. Yea; and my father.
Hel. And Hippolyta.
Lys. And he did bid us follow to the temple.
Dem. Why, then, we are awake: let's follow him;
And, by the way, let us recount our dreams. [*Exeunt.*

Bot. [*Awaking*] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, "Most fair Pyramus." Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream,—past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had,—but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play before the duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. [*Exit.*

Scene II. *Athens.* Quince's *house.*

Enter Quince, Flute, Snout, *and* Starveling.

Quin. Have you sent to Bottom's house? is he come home yet?

Star. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

Flu. If he come not, then the play is marred: it goes not forward, doth it?

Quin. It is not possible: you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

Flu. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

Quin. Yea, and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

Flu. You must say paragon: a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter SNUG.

Snug. Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married: if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

Flu. O sweet Bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a-day during his life; he could not have scaped sixpence a-day: an the duke had not given him sixpence a-day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged; he would have deserved it: sixpence a-day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter BOTTOM.

Bot. Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

Quin. Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

Bot. Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not what; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

Quin. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

Bot. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet

presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go, away! [*Exeunt.* 46

ACT V.

SCENE I. *Athens. The palace of* THESEUS.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords, *and* Attendants.

Hip. [']Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

The. More strange than true: I never may believe
These antique fables nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,—
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic, 10
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear!

Hip. But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigur'd so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

The. Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, *and* HELENA.

Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!

Lys. More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

The. Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Philostrate.

Phil. Here, mighty Theseus.

The. Say, what abridgment have you for this evening?
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

Phil. There is a brief how many sports are ripe:
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

[*Giving a paper.*

The. [*Reads*] "The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp."
We'll none of that: that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.
[*Reads*] "The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage."
That is an old device; and it was play'd
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.
[*Reads*] "The thrice-three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary."
That is some satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.
[*Reads*] "A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth."
Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!
That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

Phil. A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted:
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehears'd, I must confess,
Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears
The passion of loud laughter never shed.

The. What are they that do play it?

Phil. Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,
Which never labour'd in their minds till now;
And now have toil'd their unbreath'd memories
With this same play against your nuptial.

The. And we will hear it.

Phil. No, my noble lord;
It is not for you: I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain
To do you service.
The. I will hear that play;
For never any thing can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.
[*Exit Philostrate.*
Hip. I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharg'd,
And duty in his service perishing.
The. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.
Hip. He says they can do nothing in this kind.
The. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
Our sport shall be to take what they mistake:
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.
Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practis'd accent in their fears,
And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome;
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity,
In least speak most, to my capacity.

Re-enter PHILOSTRATE.

Phil. So please your Grace, the Prologue is address'd.
The. Let him approach. [*Flourish of trumpets.*

Enter QUINCE *for the* Prologue.

Pro. If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider, then, we come but in despite.
We do not come as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight,
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand, and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.

The. This fellow doth not stand upon points.

Lys. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

Hip. Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

The. His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Enter PYRAMUS *and* THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, *and* LION.

Pro. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
This beauteous lady, Thisby is certain.
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper: at the which let no man wonder.

This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright;
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;
And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain,
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

[*Exeunt Prologue, Pyramus, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine.*

The. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

Dem. No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

Wall. In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall, as I would have you think,
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

The. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

Dem. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

The. Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

Enter PYRAMUS.

Pyr. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!
[*Wall holds up his fingers.*
Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

The. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

Pyr. No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving me" is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Enter THISBE.

This. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

Pyr. I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.
Thisby!

This. My love! thou art my love, I think.

Pyr. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace:
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

This. And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

Pyr. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

This. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.
Pyr. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!
This. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.
Pyr. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?
This. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.
[*Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe.*

Wall. Thus have I, Wall, my part dischargèd so;
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go. [*Exit.*

The. Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

Dem. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning. 211

Hip. This is the silliest stuff that e'er I heard.

The. The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

Hip. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

The. If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion. 221

Enter LION *and* MOONSHINE.

Lion. You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

The. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience. 231
Dem. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.
Lys. This lion is a very fox for his valour.
The. True; and a goose for his discretion.

Dem. Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion; and the fox carries the goose.

The. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well: leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

Moon. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;—

Dem. He should have worn the horns on his head.

The. He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

Moon. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

The. This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the lanthorn. How is it else the man i' the moon?

Dem. He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is already in snuff.

Hip. I am aweary of this moon: would he would change!

The. It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

Lys. Proceed, Moon.

Moon. All that I have to say is, to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon: I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

Dem. Why, all these should be in the lanthorn; for all these are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe.

Enter THISBE.

This. This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

Lion. [*Roaring*] O— [*Thisbe runs off.*

Dem. Well roared, Lion.

The. Well run, Thisbe.

Hip. Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace. [*The Lion tears Thisbe's mantle, and exit.*

The. Well moused, Lion.

Lys. And so the lion vanished.

Dem. And then came Pyramus.

Enter PYRAMUS.

Pyr. Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams:
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to taste of truest Thisby sight.
But stay,—O spite!—
But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!
Thy mantle good,
What, stain'd with blood?
Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come,
Cut thread and thrum;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

The. This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

Hip. Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man

Pyr. O, wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:
Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame
That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer.
Come, tears, confound;
Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus;
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop: [*Stabs himself.*

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled;
My soul is in the sky:
Tongue, lose thy light;
Moon, take thy flight: [*Exit Moonshine.*
Now die, die, die, die, die. [*Dies.*

Dem. No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

Lys. Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

The. With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and prove an ass.

Hip. How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover?

The. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play. 321

Re-enter THISBE.

Hip. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus: I hope she will be brief.

Dem. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us,—she for a woman, God bless us.

Lys. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

Dem. And thus she moans, *videlicet*:— 330

This. Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These lily lips,
This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,
Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan:
His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters Three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:
Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue: [*Stabs herself.*
And, farewell, friends;
Thus Thisby ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu. [*Dies.*

The. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

Dem. Ay, and Wall too.

Bot. [*Starting up*] No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

The. No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But, come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone. [*A dance by two of the Clowns.*

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:
Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.
I fear we shall outsleep the coming morn,
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguil'd
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.

A fortnight hold we this solemnity
In nightly revels and new jollity. [*Exeunt.*

Enter PUCK.

Puck. Now the hungry lion roars
And the wolf behowls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night
That the graves, all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide:
And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic: not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
I am sent with broom, before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.

Enter OBERON *and* TITANIA, *with their Train.*

Obe. Through the house give glimmering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire;
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

Tita. First, rehearse your song by rote,
To each word a warbling note:

Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place. [*Song and dance.*

Obe. Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be;
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be;
And the blots of Nature's hand
Shall not in their issue stand;
Never mole, hare-lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait;
And each several chamber bless,
Through this palace, with sweet peace;
And the owner of it blest
Ever shall in safety rest,
Trip away; make no stay;
Meet me all by break of day.

[*Exeunt Oberon, Titania, and Train.*

Puck. If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here,
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:

If you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long,
Else the Puck a liar call:
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends. [*Exit.*

NOTES.

Abbreviations:

E. = the English language;
G. = *Glossary*.

Several other abbreviations used sometimes in the *Notes* are explained at the beginning of the *Glossary*, in which they occur more frequently. They should be observed; see p. 130.

ACT I.

Scene 1.

At the outset a dramatist should let us know what is supposed to have gone before and give us some idea of what the play is to be about. Observe how easily Shakespeare does this, and how he unites the different threads of the plot. (1) Theseus has won Hippolyta: we expect their wedding later on. It will, we learn, be celebrated with "merriments." This prepares us (2) for the scenes in which Bottom and his friends appear: their "interlude" will be connected with the wedding. (3) The love-complications, in which Theseus is appealed to, are set forth clearly: we see that they will form a considerable element in the play, and that their solution also will be connected, in some way, with the marriage of Theseus. (4) The lovers and the interlude-players select the same time of meeting and the same scene—as it happens, a very haunt of the fairies who, of course, play tricks on the poor "human mortals." Thus the main threads of interest are combined into that general tangle called the plot.

5. *dowager*, a widow with an income charged on an estate; see G.

6. *withering out*, delaying his full enjoyment of—because as long as the 'dowager' lives the heir has to pay the income due to her.

7, 8. This implies that four full days and nights were to elapse

before the wedding; but the action of the play really extends over only three days and two nights (see *Introduction*, p. xv).

11. *solemnities;* used especially of a wedding ceremony.

Philostrate; the name is from Chaucer (*The Knight's Tale*, 570).

12. *merriments*, i.e. such as the play of Bottom and his friends.

13. *pert*, lively; in a good sense; see G.

15. Cf. Collins, *The Passions*, "*Pale* Melancholy sat retired": an appropriate epithet when melancholy is *personified*.

companion; here, as often in Shakespeare, contemptuous; cf. 2 *Henry IV.* II. 4. 132, "I scorn you, scurvy companion ('fellow')." Literally 'one who takes meals with another'—Lat. *cum*+*panis*, bread.

16, 17. According to the story in Plutarch, Theseus overthrew the Amazons in battle, and married either Hippolyta or Antiopa.

19. *triumph*, festivities, pageants; see G.

20. *duke*, ruler (Lat. *dux*); it is Chaucer's title for Theseus; cf. *The Knight's Tale*, 2, "Ther was a *duk* that highte [was called] Theseus." Cf. *Genesis* xxxvi. 15, "*dukes* of the sons of Esau," i.e. chiefs.

21. *Egeus*; the name is from Plutarch; scan as three syllables.

27. Scan *'witch'd;* prefixes are often dropped. *bosom*, heart.

28. Note *thou* to Lysander, *you* to Theseus (127): in Shakespeare *thou* often expresses contempt or anger,—*you*, respect. Also, the repetition *thou, thou* is contemptuous.

32. i.e. and stealthily hast stamped thyself on her imagination. The metaphor is that of making a stamp or mark on some soft substance—as we say, 'making an impression on' (cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 566), and so gaining influence over. Hermia's fancy is occupied with the image of Lysander, to the exclusion of all other people.

33. *gaud*=any trifle, toy; here perhaps 'trinkets.' From Lat. *gaudium*, joy—in Late Lat. an ornament. Cf. IV. 1. 172.

Shakespeare elsewhere uses *conceit*=a fanciful thought or device; so here *conceits*=things (i.e. gifts) fancifully thought out or devised.

34. *knacks;* as we say, 'knick-knacks'=trifles; see G.

35. *prevailment*, influence. *unhardened*, soft, impressionable.

39. i.e. *if* it be so *that*. *Grace;* the appellation of a duke.

41. *privilege of Athens*, right enjoyed by Athenian citizens.

42. i.e. *that*, as she is mine, I may etc.

44. *our law*. By one of the laws of Solon, the great Athenian law-giver, parents had power of life and death over their children. Really Solon, born about 638 B.C., belonged to a much later date than the period in which the events of this play are supposed to occur.

45. *immediately*, expressly. *in that case*, to meet such a case. Shakespeare is using the legal terms of an indictment, the technical formula to which he alludes being, "In such case made and provided." Many legal phrases are used (quite accurately) by Shakespeare; and this has been considered by some to confirm the vague tradition that as a youth he was for a time in an attorney's office.

46. *be advised*, be careful, take heed; cf. F. *s'aviser*, to consider.

51. *disfigure*=*un*figure, make it cease to be a figure or form.

54. *in this kind*, in a matter of this kind (marriage); or in this respect, viz. that he wants your father's approval ("voice"). In 55 the construction changes; strictly *wanting* has nothing to agree with.

60. *concern*, suit, befit.

65. *die the death*, a proverbial phrase; "*the* death," i.e. the death that is the appointed penalty of the particular offence. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. 14. 26, "She hath betray'd me and shall die the death,' i.e. the death appointed for traitors.

67. *question*, examine, interrogate, your affections.

68. *Know of*, inquire of. *blood*, passions (as in 74).

69, 70. *Whether... You can;* dependent on the verbs in 68. Scan *whether* as a monosyllable=*whe'er;* cf. III. 2. 81.

70—73. The gist of these lines and of 89, 90 is that Hermia may have to dedicate herself to the service of Diana, the goddess of maidenhood, whose rites were celebrated by virgin-priestesses. Shakespeare expresses the idea in terms, e.g. "nun," "cloister," which being associated with the monastic life of mediæval Christianity are, strictly speaking, inappropriate in the mouth of Theseus, a pagan Greek. The passage, in fact, is a kind of anachronism.

70. *livery*, dress (see G.); here=the state of those who wear it.

71. *cloister;* "an Abbey, Priory, *religious House*" (as here)—Cotgrave (1611). Lat. *claustrum* or *clostrum*. *mewed*, shut up; see G.

72. *sister;* in its religious sense 'nun'; cf. 70.

73. *moon*, a type of chastity; Diana was the moon-goddess.

74, 75. Doubtless, meant as a compliment to Queen Elizabeth, the Maiden Queen, who was probably present at the first performance.

75. *maiden pilgrimage*, passage through life as maidens.

76—78. A figurative way of saying that for most people the married state is to be preferred to the single. It is the thought worked out by Shakespeare in many of his *Sonnets* (wherein he urges his friend "W. H." to marry), the metaphor of the *rose* whose perfume is "distilled," or extracted, occurring in 54; see also 1 and 5. Sidney

Walker quoted a passage similar to the present from the Latin *Colloquies* of Erasmus, which may be rendered: "I consider the rose happier which withers in a man's hand, delighting meanwhile both his eyes and his nostrils, than that which withers on the bush."

76. *earthlier happy*=more earthly-happy, i.e. happier as regards this world. *earthlier*, the comparative of the adj. used adverbially; cf. *wiselier*, *Tempest*, II. 1. 21. Capell's conjecture *earthly happier* would be a simpler reading, but no change is needed.

80. *virgin patent*, patent (=privilege, right) of virginity. Cf. "thy fair virtue"=the virtue or force of thy fairness, III. 1. 143; "civil bounds"=bounds of civility, *Twelfth Night*, I. 4. 21. Note that in these cases, which are frequent in Shakespeare, (1) the adj. + the noun =a compound noun (e.g. *virginity-patent*); (2) the adj. defines the sphere or extent of the noun. Thus here "virgin" defines the character of the "patent": it is a patent consisting in virginity. English does not adapt itself like German to compounds.

81. i.e. unto the lordship (=sovereignty, rule) of that man *to* whose yoke etc. *his*, emphatic; it contains the antecedent of *whose*.

82. *give*=give *to;* in modern E. the preposition is omitted only before a personal noun or pronoun, e.g. 'give it me.'

88. *as he would*, as he (your father) desires.

89. *Diana*, the Latin goddess identified with the Greek goddess Artemis; strictly, the Greek Theseus should not be made to use the Latin name. *protest*, vow.

90. *austerity*, strictness of life, virginity.

92. *crazed*, faulty, with a flaw in it; see G.

98. *estate unto*, make over unto, bestow on him.

99. *my lord*, Theseus; cf. 24.

99, 100. i.e. as well-born and as wealthy as he. Cf. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, v. 2. 23, "you are *well derived*"=of good birth.

101, 102. i.e. at least equal to his fortunes, if not actually better.

105. *prosecute*, endeavour to obtain.

106. *to his head*, in his presence; we should say 'to his face.'

107, 108. Cf. what Demetrius himself admits, IV. 1. 176, 177.

109. *devoutly*, with devotion, most earnestly.

110. *spotted*, wicked; cf. *Titus Andronicus*, II. 3. 74, "Spotted, detested, and abominable." So Lat. *maculosus*=defiled. The metaphor is clearer in *spotless*=without stain, i.e. innocent.

113. *self-affairs*, my own affairs; cf. *self-offences*, one's own offences, *Measure for Measure*, III. 2. 280, *self-danger*, *Cymbeline*, III. 4. 149.

116. *schooling*, instructions, i.e. in connection with the matters alluded to in 124—126. Schmidt takes *schooling*=reprimand.

120. *extenuate*, mitigate, relax; make *tenuis* (Latin), slender.

122. *what cheer?* how is it with you? *cheer*, see G.

123. *go along*, come along with me.

125. In Shak. *nuptial* is commoner than *nuptials*. Conversely he more than once uses *funerals* with a singular sense; cf. *Julius Caesar*, v. 3. 105, "*His funerals* shall not be in our camp." See v. 75, note.

126. *nearly that*, i.e. that nearly concerns.

128. The plot requires this private conference between Hermia and Lysander at which the scheme to leave Athens may be arranged; so Shakespeare makes Theseus command all the other characters then on the stage to go with him. The device seems artificial, for Egeus would not leave Hermia alone with the lover whom he detests. But in the Elizabethan theatre, as there was no curtain to fall and practically no scenery to mark a change of scene, the tendency was to extend a scene instead of starting a fresh one: as if the playwright thought that certain characters might as well stay as go off and return.

129. *chance;* a verb. Cf. Milton, *Comus*, 508, "How chance she is not in your company?" The phrase combines two constructions: (1) 'how does it chance that?' and (2) 'by what chance?'

130. *Belike*, as it seems, I suppose; probably=*by likelihood*.

131. *Beteem*, give, vouchsafe; see G.

132. *Ay me*, alas; see G.

134. One of the most familiar quotations from Shakespeare.

135. *blood*, birth; the two persons are not of the same social rank.

136. *cross*, vexation, mischance (cf. 153). *high...low;* as regards position in life. Note how in each line (136, 138, 140) Hermia echoes and comments on Lysander's words. *enthrall'd*, i.e. by love.

137. *misgraffed*, misplaced; like a fruit grafted on the wrong tree. Note *graff*, the verb's correct form, not *graft*; cf. F. *greffer*.

139. *stood upon*, depended on.

143. *momentany*, lasting a moment, brief; see G.

144. *shadow...dream*. Universally treated as symbols of that which quickly passes away. Cf. *Job* viii. 9, "our days upon earth are a shadow," and xx. 8, "he shall fly away as a dream."

145. *collied*, murky, literally 'black as with *coal*'; cf. *collier*.

146. *spleen*, sudden motion, fit; commonly of passion, laughter etc.

147, 148. Cf. *Romeo*, II. 2. 119, 120, "Like the lightning, which doth cease to be Ere one can say 'It lightens.'"

149. *confusion*, destruction; scan it as two feet. In Shakespeare and in Milton (early poems) *-ion* is often pronounced as two syllables at the end of a line (especially with words ending in *ction*, such as 'affe*ction*,' 'distra*ction*'). Cf. Milton, *Nativity Ode*, 163, "When at | the world's | last sess |*i*-ón" (i.e. four feet). This scansion of *-ion* was the regular practice in Middle English. Cf. III. 2. 230, 370, 371.

150. *ever*, always.

151. *edict*, decree, law of destiny. Scan *edict* = Lat. *edictum*; cf. Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 301, "As to his own *edicts* found contradicting"; and contrast 1 *Henry IV.* IV. 3. 79, "Some certain *édicts* and some strait decrees" (the modern accentuation). Where modern E. throws the accent forward Elizabethan E. often kept it back on the syllable accented in the original Latin word and in the French; cf. *áspect*, in Shakespeare *aspéct*, Lat. *aspéctus*; *cómmerce*, in Shakespeare *commérce*, Lat. *commércium*; and *revenue* in l. 158. Since the 17th century this French accent (from the Latin) has gradually yielded to the influence of the Teutonic element in English.

152. Scan *patience* as a trisyllable ('páti-énce'). Generally *i* or *e* before a vowel is merged in it, not pronounced; cf. 'marr*iā*ge,' 'am*iā*ble,' 'veng*eā*nce' etc. But sometimes—as here—metre requires the *i* or *e* to be scanned separately; cf. 'ám|*i*-á|ble,' IV. 1. 2.

154. *due to*, belonging to. *sighs*; cf. the picture in *As You Like It*, II. 7. 148, of the lover "sighing like furnace."

155. *fancy*, love; then a very common meaning. Cf. II. 1. 164.

158. Scan *revénue*, and contrast *révenue* (as now) in l. 6.

160. *respects*, regards.

161—163. Cf. Lysander's words, IV. 1. 156—158.

164. *forth*, a preposition = forth *from*, out of.

165. *without*, outside; cf. IV. 1. 158.

167. i.e. to pay homage to May-day by observing its rites. Cf. Chaucer, *The Knight's Tale*, 642, "And for to doon his obseruance to May"; and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, II. 4. 49—52:

> "you must be ready,
> To-morrow, by the sun, to do observance
> To flow'ry May, in Dian's wood."

Perhaps "to do observance" was proverbial in this connection.

In our old writers, from Chaucer downwards, there are constant allusions to the ceremonies and customs connected with May-day—the 'going a-Maying' early to gather hawthorn (hence termed *may*); the bringing it home to decorate the villages; the crowning of the May-

Queen, setting up of the May-pole and dances; and the singing of May-carols (cf. Milton's "Song on May Morning"). The Puritans objected strongly to these May-day observances.

169, 170. According to classical legend, Cupid, the god of love, son of Venus, was armed (see II. 1. 157) with a bow and two sorts of arrows, tipped with gold or lead—the former to cause, the latter to repel, love (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I. 469—471). Cf. the *Glosse* to Spenser's *Shepheards Calender*, *March*, "He [Cupid] is sayd to have shafts, some leaden, some golden." See *Paradise Lost*, IV. 763.

171. *simplicity*, innocence. *doves*, the birds sacred to Venus, whose car they drew; cf. "dove-drawn" said of her, *Tempest*, IV. 94.

173, 174. *that fire*, the funeral pyre on which Dido, queen of Carthage, burned herself when Æneas, the Trojan, with whom she was in love, sailed away to Italy. Vergil tells the story, *Æn.* IV. 504 et seq. Strictly, the allusion is an anachronism, because Greek mythology made Æneas live long after the time of Theseus. Cf. 70—73, note.

180. *whither away?* where are you going to?

181. *that fair*, i.e. that word 'fair.'

182. *fair*=fairness: an adj.=noun, as often in Shak. Cf. *Sonnet* 16, "Neither in inward worth, nor outward fair." See p. 154.

183. The *lode-* (or *load-*) star is the polar star; literally 'the star that *leads*' (i.e. sailors); from A. S. *lad*, a way, *lǽdan*, to *lead*.

184. *tuneable*, tune*ful*; see IV. 1. 129. In Elizabethan E. the termination *-able*, now commonly passive, was often active=*-ful*. We still have 'changeable'=full of change, 'peaceable,' and some others.

186. *catching*, contagious. 'You may (says Helena) "catch" a disease (by infection) from a person: would that you might also "catch" (i.e. get, obtain) his face, looks, voice etc.'—a kind of quibble or pun on "catch." *favour*, features; see G.

187. *Yours would I;* Hanmer's correction of the reading in the Quartos and 1st Folio, *Your words I. Yours*, i.e. *favour*.

190, 191. i.e. I would give the whole world—except Demetrius—to be like you; literally, 'to be transformed ("translated," see III. 1. 122) into you,'=into your likeness. *bate=abate*, to deduct, except.

191. *I'll;* after *were* in 190 strict sequence of tenses requires *I'd*; but such irregularities, often very vivid (as here), and due to some sudden change of thought, are not uncommon in Shakespeare.

207. i.e. hath made Athens, formerly like "a Paradise" (205), now like a Hell to me (because while she stays in Athens she is not allowed to see Lysander). Cf. II. 1. 243.

209. *Phœbe*, a classical name of the moon, as *Phœbus* of the sun.

211. *pearl*, dew; a favourite comparison; cf. II. 1. 14, 15.

212. *still*, always, or constantly.

215. *faint*, either of scent or of colour (since they are "in the wood," i.e. out of the sun); perhaps the latter—cf. "*pale* primroses," *Winter's Tale*, IV. 4. 122, *Cymbeline*, IV. 2. 221.

216. *sweet;* the Quartos and Folios have *sweld;* the correction (Theobald's) is required by the rhyme. But it loses the antithesis between *emptying* and *swelled*.

219. *stranger companies;* the Quartos and Folios have *strange companions*. Again Theobald corrected (for the rhyme).

222. *Keep word*, keep your promise.

224. *I will*, i.e. keep word.

226. *some...other some*=certain people...others. The original meaning of *some* was 'a certain,' 'one,' and in the plural 'people'; and *other some* (preceded by *some*) was then a not uncommon idiom=other people; cf. *Acts* xvii. 18.

231. *So I*, so do I err.

admiring of; I take *admiring* as a present participle and *of* as the redundant preposition found in Elizabethan E. with many verbs; cf. Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, II. xxiii. 13, "Neither doth learning *admire* or *esteem of* this architecture." So in the same work (II. xxv. 7) "define of" and "discern of" (II. xxi. 1). Another view is that *admiring* is not a participle but a verbal noun before which the prep. *in* or *on* or *a* must be supplied—as though Shakespeare had written "in admiration of." So Abbott (178) explains *Lear*, II. 1. 40, 41, "Here stood he...mumbling *of* wicked charms"=*a*-mumbling of.

232. *quantity*, proportion. The real value of things bears no proportion to the exaggerated value which love attributes to them.

233. *transpose*, transform. *form*, goodly appearance.

234. Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, III. 2. 63, "where is fancy [love] bred?"

235. Cf. the *Glosse* to Spenser's *Shepheards Calender*, *March*, "so is he [Cupid] described of the Poetes to be a *boye* [cf. 241]...*blindfolded*, because he maketh no difference of personages: wyth divers coloured *winges*." This notion of Cupid's blindness is mediæval, not classical.

236. *taste of*, particle of; love is quite devoid of judgment.

237. *figure*, symbolise.

242. *eyne*, eyes; see G.

243. *hail'd down*, poured down as thick as hail.

249. *a dear expense*, a privilege bought at a high price; since it is not her interest that Demetrius should meet Hermia.

251. She means to go with him to the wood (though one might suppose that he would object to her company); and these last lines, 248—251, are intended to explain why she does so strange a thing as to bring her rival, Hermia, and Demetrius together.

Scene 2.

The whole scene is imitated closely in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, III. 5 (a part written, no doubt, by Fletcher), where the morris-dancers have a final rehearsal of the piece they are to enact before Theseus and Hippolyta.

In Shakespeare's plays and in Elizabethan plays generally there is (I believe) a considerable element of what has been called 'topical allusion'—allusion, that is, to topics and events of the time, literary customs, current jokes etc. Observe the 'topical' references in this scene, e.g. to (1) the affected titles of plays, poems etc., 11—15; (2) familiar types of stage-character, 31—32, 41—43; (3) stage-devices of representation, 51, 52; and perhaps (4) current jokes, 77, 111. Sometimes we feel that there must be an allusion in the text: only the key to it has been lost.

2. Doubtless *Bottom*, the weaver, is so called in allusion to *bottom*, 'a ball of thread'—a term used by weavers. See G.

You were best, a common Elizabethan idiom; cf. *Julius Cæsar* III. 3. 15, "answer truly...you were best." It may be the Old English impersonal use=*to* you *it* were best—*you* a dative; but probably the construction is personal—*you* a nominative. Cf. "*I* were best," *Cymbeline*, III. 6. 19: which in O. E. would have been "*me* were best"=*to* me *it* were best. People misunderstood that (1) *me* was a dative, (2) the sentence was impersonal, and substituted *I* which seemed more correct. The impersonal constructions so largely used in O. E. were becoming less familiar to the Elizabethans.

generally; he means *separately*. Cf. the mistake in 84. Bottom's love of long words leads him into such blunders.

3. *the scrip*="the scroll," i.e. the list of actors. Lat. *scriptum*.

6. *interlude*, entertainment; see G.

10. *grow to a point*, come to an end (cf. 'come to *the* point').

11. *Marry*, an exclamation often used to affirm a thing='indeed,' 'why,' 'to be sure'; corrupted from the name 'Virgin *Mary*.' Cf. *by'r lakin*, III. 1. 14. Such expressions dated from pre-Reformation times.

11—13. The title is thought to be a parody of that prefixed to *Cambyses*, a play by Thomas Preston (see IV. 2. 19, 20, note), licensed 1570 and described on the title-page as "A lamentable tragedy mixed ful of pleasant mirth etc." Upon the story of Pyramus and Thisbe see *Introduction*, pp. xxi., xxii.

14, 15. *and a merry*, a satiric glance at the fanciful sub-titles of poems once in vogue. Thus Skelton's *Magnyfycence* (1529) is called "A goodly interlude *and a mery*." (Steevens.)

16. *spread yourselves*, stand apart, not all together.

24. *a tyrant;* such as King Herod in the 'Miracle-plays,' whom Hamlet (III. 2. 16) takes as a type of the ranting, swaggering stage-tyrant. It is characteristic of Bottom to assume that he has been chosen to play the chief part. All through he shows himself the leading spirit of "our company" (l. 1). See III. 1. 8, note.

25. *gallant=gallantly*, which the Folios read.

27. *ask*, require; a common sense in Elizabethan E.

29. *condole*. Some think that this is one of Bottom's mistakes; but perhaps *condole* = mourn, lament (used absolutely) was then good English. Certainly the use of *condole* in Elizabethan E. was less limited than now; cf. e.g. Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 1076, "I come not...to condole thy chance"=to bemourn.

31, 32. For Shakespeare's audience the allusions here were clear and full of point.

Thus the life of *Hercules* ('Ercles) and the story of his twelve labours had formed the subject of various dramatic pieces in which Hercules was a blustering character. Cf. Greene's *Groats-worth of Wit* (1592), where an actor says, "*The Twelue Labours of Hercules* haue I *terribly thundered* on the stage." This violent, melodramatic style which was so popular in the early period of the Elizabethan drama, being a survival from the old 'Miracle-plays,' was in a great measure driven from the stage by Shakespeare's own influence. He ridicules it in *Hamlet*, III. 2. 1—40.

to tear a cat in; a proverbial phrase for stage-ranting, i.e. violent *speech*. In *Histrio-Mastix* (1610), some one says to an actor: "Sirrah, this is you that would rend and *tear a cat* upon the stage."

to make all split; another proverbial phrase, signifying violent *action;* originally used among sailors, the metaphor being that of a ship breaking up on rocks. Cf. Greene's *Never Too Late* (1590), "as the *Mariners* say, a man would have thought *al would haue split againe*." Hence the general idea of bluster. It offended Hamlet (III.

2. 11, 12) to hear a noisy actor "*tear* a passion to tatters, to *split* the ears of the groundlings" (=the people in the pit of a theatre).

33—40. Either a quotation from some piece like *The Twelue Labours* mentioned above; or a parody of the style of such pieces. On the alliteration (*r...r*, *s...s* etc.) see v. 147, note.

37. *Phibbus*, Phœbus, the sun.

39. *make*, make fortunate; proverbially contrasted with *mar*.

44. *bellows-mender; Flute* repaired the bellows of organs etc.: a quasi-musical profession, whence his name (cf. l. 2, note).

47. *wandering*, i.e. a knight-*errant* (Lat. *errans* = wandering); like Spenser's Redcrosse Knight in the *Faerie Queene*.

50. *play a woman*. On the Elizabethan stage female parts were played by young men or boy-actors; cf. *Coriolanus*, II. 2. 100, "When he might act the woman in the scene," and *As You Like It*, where Rosalind says in the *Epilogue*, "if I were a woman." A French company of players visited London in 1629, and that was the first appearance in England of women on the public stage; but the innovation was unpopular—indeed the forcigners were hissed off the boards. Probably, however, there were occasional cases during the reign of Charles I. of women acting in public (at private entertainments it was quite usual); and after the Restoration the practice was legalised by a Royal Patent issued in 1662.

51. *That's all one*, 'all the same'—it does not matter.

51, 52. No doubt, when a boy-actor who had to play a woman's part was not so feminine-looking as to pass well for a woman, he wore a mask; and as the mask was then much used by ladies it would not have an odd effect on the stage. Of course, the actor would modulate his voice in a female tone.

small, in a treble voice, high and clear; cf. *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, IV. 1. 58, "'Twas one that sung, and, by the *smallness* of it [i.e. the voice], A boy or woman." So "little" in l. 54.

53. *An*, if; see G.

55. *Thisne, Thisne;* so the Quartos and Folios; probably a mistake for *Thisbe*—but whose? Most likely, not the printer's (contrast the next line). And if Bottom's, why does he make it only here? Perhaps the reason is that the name is the first word that he has to utter in this his first attempt to speak in a "monstrous little voice." For an instant, may be, it plays him false: then by the next line he has recovered himself. The reading 'thisne, thisne,'='in this manner,' a sense which *thissen* bears in some dialects, has been suggested.

62—66. Note that three characters in the 'interlude' are here mentioned who do not appear when it is performed; also that afterwards Quince plays the *Prologue* and Snout the *Wall*. Changes were made after Bottom's suggestions in III. 1. 18—23, 68—73.

67. *fitted*, suitably arranged; cf. v. 65.

71. *nothing but roaring*. Really the lion has eight lines to speak when the 'interlude' is performed in Act v. But that was one of the changes made after the rehearsal in Act III. sc. 1.

77. *fright...the ladies*. Perhaps this was or became a proverbial joke. Thus in Jonson's *Masque of Augurs* a character proposes to bring some performing bears on the stage and the Master of the Revels says that he would consent, "if he [I] were assured the aforesaid game *would...not fright the ladies*." There is a similar passage in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, III. 5. 34, 35.

84. *aggravate*, make louder than usual; he means the opposite.

roar you, i.e. for you: *you* representing the old dative.

88. *proper*, fine, handsome; see what Thisbe says, v. 331—42. These compliments in Quince's speech induce Bottom to yield.

93. *were I best;* see l. 2, note.

95. *discharge*, perform; cf. IV. 2. 8, v. 368.

your; often used thus colloquially, like Lat. *iste*, to indicate some person or thing known to everyone; cf. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 3, "you mouth it, as many of *your* players do," i.e. the players whom you and everybody know. So in III. 1. 33. *beard;* the actors in the 'interlude' wore false beards (see IV. 2. 36).

96. *orange-tawny;* dark yellow; see G.

97. *purple-in-grain*, red; cf. "mustachio-purple-hued"=having red mustaches, 1 *Henry IV.* II. 1. 83. *purple*=red (e.g. of blood) is common in Shakespeare; cf. the use of *purpureus* in Latin. *grain*=dye, properly scarlet dye; see G.

French-crown-colour; light yellow, like a French gold coin.

99. *French crowns;* Quince is punning. Here *crown*=the crown of the head, and "French crown" is a slang term for a bald head (a disease called "the French disease" producing baldness).

102. *entreat...desire*. He begins with the strongest, and ends with the weakest, verb: a type of anti-climax time-honoured as a joke.

con, learn by heart; cognate with *can*, A.S. *cunnan*, to know.

104. *a mile;* Lysander (I. 1. 165) said a league (about 3 miles).

107. *devices*, schemes; or perhaps=performance, as in v. 50.

107, 108. *draw a bill*, write out a list.

properties, still the technical word for stage-requisites and actors' equipments, such as Moonshine's "lanthorn...and bush," v. 136.

111. *obscenely;* meaning (?) *obscurely*, in the dark; cf. "by moonlight," l. 104. Costard in *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. 1. 145, blunders over the same word. Perhaps there was some current joke about it.

114. *hold, or cut bow-strings;* apparently a proverbial way of pledging oneself to fulfil an engagement, under the severest penalty for breaking it. Capell says that the phrase was used by archers when they made up a party for shooting at the butts. A man, in undertaking to be present, said that he would "hold"=keep his promise: if he broke his promise, they might "cut his bow-strings," as a punishment.

ACT II.

Scene 1.

3. *Thorough;* the metre requires this form; see G.

7. *moon's;* =two syllables; cf. *room*, 58. Several of these lines (e.g. 6—8) have inverted stresses, with an extra syllable at the end—thus: "Î do | wánder | év'ry | whére." (A so-called 'trochaic' foot consists of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed; a so-called 'iambic' foot is just the reverse—see II. 2. 77, note.)

sphere, orbit, i.e. the hollow region of space through which the moon makes its circuit. According to the then accepted Ptolemaic system of astronomy, *this sphere itself moved* (as well as the moon).

9. *orbs*, the circles of luxuriant, rich-coloured grass often found in meadows; they were popularly thought to be caused by the fairies dancing 'in a round' (see 140). In *The Tempest*, v. 37, Prospero addresses the fairies that "By moonshine do the green sour *ringlets* make" (see 86). The prosaic, scientific explanation of these 'fairy-rings' is that they are due to fungi which fringe their outer border and by absorbing inorganic materials serve as fertilisers. (In the ash of the common fungus St George's Agaric a phosphate composed of Potash and Phosphoric Acid forms about 86 per cent. of the whole; and this phosphate is a very strong fertiliser.)

10. *pensioners*, attendants, retainers; see G.

11. The uniforms of the Queen's Pensioners may be referred to.

12. *fairy favours*, presents given by the fairies; cf. IV. 1. 54.

13. *live*, reside. *savours*, scent, fragrance.

14. *go seek; to* is generally omitted by Shakespeare after 'go' and 'come,' which are almost auxiliary verbs.

15. An imitation, as it would seem, of this line occurs in the anonymous play, *The Wisdome of Doctor Dodypoll* (III. 5), printed in 1600, but written about 1596:

"the light Faires daunst upon the flowers,
Hanging on every leafe an orient *pearle*."

16. *lob*, clown; rather a contemptuous word; perhaps the fairy who serves Titania herself disdains the mere 'Hobgoblin' who plays clownish pranks on country-folk. See G.

17. *elves*, sprites; *elf* is Teutonic; A. S. *ælf*, Germ. *elf*.

20. *passing fell*, very fierce. *passing* = exceedingly.

wrath, wrathful; not elsewhere in Shakespeare an adj., but used so by Milton, *Nativity Ode*, 171, "wrath to see his kingdom fail."

22. Titania gives a different account of the boy (123—137).

23. *changeling*, a child stolen by the fairies; commonly used of the fairy-child (or elf) left by them in place of the human one—cf. Tennyson's *Gareth*, "the king is not the king, But only changeling out of Fairy-land." Scan 'changeling' as three syllables.

25. *trace*, wander through, i.e. with him (Oberon).

29, 30. *spangled*, looking like spangles (i.e. silver discs). *sheen*, brightness; akin to Germ. *schön*, beautiful. *square*, quarrel.

33. *shrewd*, mischievous; see G.

34. *Robin Goodfellow*. See *Introduction*, p. xxix.

Some of the tricks mentioned in this and the next speech are among those which other writers attribute to Robin Goodfellow, in accordance with popular superstition. (See *Introduction*, p. xxx.)

35. *villagery;* a collective word = villages. Scan *villag'ry*.

36. *Skim milk*, i.e. steal the cream from it. *labour in the quern*, grind corn—a good action. She mentions Puck's good and bad habits together. *quern*, a hand-mill for grinding corn; see G.

Skim...labour; the singular after "*he* that" would be more regular, but the construction is influenced by the sense, which is—'do *you* not skim? do *you* not labour?' So with *make*, 37, 38, and *mislead*, 39.

36, 38. *sometimes* or *sometime* is used as the rhythm requires.

37. *bootless*, to no purpose, uselessly; an adverb qualifying *churn*.

38. *barm*, frothy 'head,' yeast (a sign of fermentation).

39. *Mislead*, with false fire (III. 1. 112).

40. *Hob;* corrupted from *Robin*. *goblin*, see G.

46. *filly*, a mare colt; the 1st Folio has *silly*.

47, 48. There was a beverage called 'Gossip's cup,' of which the ingredients were *ale*, *spice* (nutmeg), sugar, toast, and *roasted crab-apples;* so named because much in vogue at christening feasts (see *gossip* in G.). Cf. *L'Allegro*, 100, "the *spicy* nut-brown *ale*."

50. *dewlap*, neck; properly used of the loose skin that hangs from the necks of cattle; see IV. I. 127.

51. *wisest;* said ironically. *aunt*, old woman.

54. "The custom of crying *tailor* at a sudden fall backwards, I think I remember to have observed. He that slips beside his chair, falls [just] as a tailor squats upon his board" (Johnson).

55. *quire*, old form of *choir* (Lat. *chorus*).

cough...laugh. The rhyme is perfect in the reading of the Quartos and Folios, *coffe...loffe.* Possibly *loffe=laugh* was then not far removed from the ordinary pronunciation. There was at least some uncertainty about the word; cf. Marston's *Parasitaster* (1606), Act IV., where a critic is said to have vowed "to leave to posteritie the true orthography and pronunciation of *laughing*." In the ballad of Mother Hubbard, the lady bought her dog a *coffin* and then came home to find him *loffing* (Halliwell). Old ballads often preserve old forms and idioms.

56. *waxen*, increase, i.e. grow merrier; see G.

neeze; a parallel form to *sneeze*, both from O. E. *fneósan* (from Icelandic root). Cf. *Job* xli. 18, "By his neesings a light doth shine."

57. *wasted*, spent; cf. V. 382.

58. *room;* =two syllables. Monosyllables containing diphthongs or long vowels—e.g. *sleep*, *sweet*, *cold*, *speak* etc.—since they allow the voice to dwell on them, often take the place of a whole foot; cf. *moon*, 7; *three*, III. 2. 437; *new*, IV. I. 40.

64, 65. *I know when*, I know occasions when.

66. *Corin;* a Latin name for a shepherd.

67. *pipes of corn*, the traditional "*oaten* flute" (*Lycidas*, 33) of shepherds; cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. 913, "When shepherds pipe on *oaten* straws." *versing*, making love in verses.

69. *steep.* The 1st Quarto has *steppe* (the word used of the great plains in Central Asia); the 2nd Quarto and Folios *steepe.* A few editors prefer the former reading, but most the latter, regarding *steppe* as merely a misspelling. It is doubtful whether *steppe* (a word of Russian origin) was known at all to Elizabethan writers. Also "*steppe* of India" seems a much less intelligible and pointed allusion than "*steep* of India," which would be readily understood—like Milton's "Beyond

the Indian mount," *Paradise Lost*, I. 781—of the famous Himalaya chain in the north of India. As to Shakespeare's reason for associating Oberon with the remote East, see *Introduction*, p. xxviii.

70. *bouncing*, blustering, swaggering (as we should say of a *man*). Hippolyta was Queen of the Amazons.

71. The buskin (Lat. *cothurnus*), a boot with high heels, was worn by hunters and huntresses, e.g. by Diana (goddess of the chase) and her nymphs—cf. "silver-buskined Nymphs," Milton, *Arcades*, 33. Hence Hippolyta, a great huntress (as she is represented e.g. in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, I. 1. 77—79), would be "buskined."

73. For fairies blessing a marriage, see IV. 1. 94, 95, V. 410—427.

75. *Glance at*, hint at.

78. *Perigenia;* the name occurs as *Perigouna* in Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*, whence also the allusions to the names in 79, 80.

79. *Æglé;* in the Quartos and Folios *Eagles*.

81. *forgeries*, idle inventions; or deceptions.

82. *middle summer's spring*=the beginning of midsummer. Cf. "spring of day"=beginning of the day, 2 *Henry IV.* IV. 4. 35.

84. *paved*, pebbled.

85. *in=on;* cf. the Lord's Prayer, "*in* earth, as it is in heaven."

86. *ringlets*, small fairy-rings (see 9). *to*, to the sound of.

88—114. Upon the supposed allusion see *Introduction*, p. xii.

90. *Contagious*, pestilential, full of malaria.

91. *pelting*, paltry; see G.

92. *continent*=bank, i.e. that which *contains* (Lat. *continere*).

94. *lost his sweat*, expended his toil in vain.

95. *his*, its; see G. *beard*, the prickles on the ears of corn.

97. *murrion*, infected with murrain (cattle disease); see G.

98. *The nine men's morris;* also known as *the nine men's merrils*= F. *jeu de mérelles: mérelles* or *méreaux* being the F. word for the pawns or counters with which the game was played. It was a kind of open-air draughts or chess for two players, each having *nine men* or pieces, and moving them upon a diagram of three squares, one within the other, cut out of the turf. In winter-time or in bad weather, when the game was discontinued, the squares would naturally get filled up with mud etc. Cotgrave gives another name for it—*fivepenny morris*. Either *morris* is simply a corruption of *merrils* or else a *morris*-dance (see G.) was associated in some way with the game. Here the title of the game itself is used for the diagram of turf on which it was played.

99. *mazes*, labyrinths, i.e. figures marked out on village-greens for

rustic sports such as the game called *running the figure of eight* (Steevens). The players, I suppose, would have to get from certain points to other points, following an intricate course marked out; if not often used, the course and the figure generally would soon be obliterated in the luxuriant ("wanton") grass.

101. *human;* this points the difference between men and fairies, for the latter, though not *human*, were considered *mortal*, i.e. subject to mortality or death (Steevens). In *Huon of Bordeaux* Oberon himself dies at the end of the romance. *want*, lack, are without.

here; a tempting emendation, which merely adds *c*, is *cheer* (merriment). But Titania means that the winter, like the other seasons, is changed, not in respect of its merriments alone, but altogether. 'Here' (she says), 'in this region made unhappy by us, men have not their *proper* winter: all is contrary to custom: e.g. no carol is heard, and "summer buds" bloom in the frost: such a season is not a *winter*.'

103. An allusion to the moon's influence on the sea, causing ebb and flow. Cf. *Batman vppon Bartholome*, 1582 (the standard work on science in Shakespeare's time), "the Moon...*minister & Lady of the sea* ...draweth to hir [*her*] waters of the sea" (133). *floods* = seas.

104. *washes*, moistens, wets.

105. *rheumatic diseases*, i.e. those which produce a flux or flowing, such as catarrhs in the head, coughs, and colds; from *rheum* = moisture, a flowing of what were called the 'humours' of the body—Gk ῥεῦμα, from ῥέειν, to flow. Scan *rheúmatic* (the Latin accent, from *rhēumăticus*).

106. *distemperature*, disturbance of the elements and weather.

109. *Hiems* = winter (in Latin) personified. *thin;* Tyrwhitt's correction of the reading *chinne* (or *chin*) in the Quartos and Folios. Note how often *c* occurs in 108—110. *thin*, of hair; bald.

112. *childing*, fruitful, prolific; still a botanical term for some plants, e.g. 'childing daisy,' 'childing pink,' "which produce younger or smaller florets around an older (regarded as parent) blossom."

113, 114. *mazed*, bewildered. *increase*, produce. Cf. *Psalm* lxvii. 6.

116. *debate*, quarrel. *dissension;* scan as four syllables.

117. *original*, origin, or originators (cf. *Paradise Lost*, II. 375).

121. *henchman*, page; see G.

122. i.e. she would not exchange him for all fairy land.

123. *votaress*, one who has taken the vow (*votum*) of a community.

124. *spiced*, laden with spices = fragrant.

126. Cf. *Tempest* I. 2. 376, "Come unto these *yellow sands*."

127. i.e. the traders embarked on the flood (sea); for the inverted

order cf. *Timon of Athens*, IV. 2. 13, "A dedicated beggar to the air," i.e. a beggar dedicated to.

128. *When*, at which times.

138. *stay*, i.e. *to* stay. The omission of *to* with the infinitive was commoner then; we could not now say, "you ought not walk" (*Julius Cæsar*, I. 1. 3). The idiom was a survival from the time when the infinitive, having its termination *-en*, did not require any *to*.

140. *round*, dance; see G.

145. *chide*, 'quarrel'; in III. 2. 45, 218, 'scold'; in IV. 1. 120, 'bark' (being often used of a loud noise). Trace the connection.

146. *thou shalt not*, i.e. go; cf. IV. 1. 25, "I must to the barber's," i.e. go. Such elliptical expressions, at once brief and clear, are thoroughly Shakespearian.

148—168. For the possible allusions see *Appendix*, p. 149.

149. *Since*, when; used by Shakespeare='when' only after verbs denoting recollection; cf. *Taming of the Shrew*, *Induction*, I. 1. 84, "This fellow I *remember since once* he play'd"=when he played. Perhaps this use comes from the meaning 'ever since': if you recollect a thing *ever since* it occurred, you must recollect *when* it occurred.

151. *breath*, notes; used='words' in III. 2. 44, and='voice' in *Twelfth Night*, II. 3. 21, "so sweet a breath to sing."

153. *spheres*, orbits; cf. l. 7, note.

155. *thou couldst not*. Puck, the homely rustic sprite who delights in rough jests, is "a spirit of a common rate" (III. 1. 157) compared with the ethereal fairy king and queen: hence the vision of Cupid is naturally hid from his grosser sight (Boas). In *Kenilworth*, xvii., Scott makes Raleigh quote lines 155—164 to Queen Elizabeth.

156, 157. *cold*, chaste. *arm'd*, with bow and arrows (I. 1. 169).

161. *might*, was able to; the preterite of *may=can*.

162. *watery*; applied to the moon ("the moist star," *Hamlet*, I. 1. 118) either because she controls the tides (see 103, note), or (as I think) in allusion to the Elizabethan view that she was what Milton (*Par. Lost*, V. 422) calls a "moist continent," drawing up moisture from this earth.

163. *votaress*; so called because a "vestal" vowed to virginity.

164. Now a familiar quotation, like I. 1. 134. What makes a line or saying proverbial is often not the matter but the manner—some peculiar *verbal* beauty or literary artifice that stamps the words on the memory, e.g. assonance or alliteration, as here (*m...m*, *f...f*).

fancy-free, free from the power of love (see I. 1. 155).

165. *bolt*, arrow.

166, 167. *now purple;* cf. III. 2. 102, 103, IV. 1. 78.

168. *love-in-idleness*, the pansy or heart's-ease (*viola tricolor*). Cf. Cotgrave, "*Herbe clavelée.* Paunsie, Harts ease...*loue* or liue *in idleness*, two faces vnder a hood." The pretty fancy of the pansy changing from "milk-white" to "purple" seems to be Shakespeare's own; unless indeed he has transferred to it what Ovid (in the 'Pyramus and Thisbe' story) had said of the mulberry—viz. that the fruit, once "white as snow," became of "a deep dark purple colour" when the blood of Pyramus was shed at the foot of the tree.

174. *leviathan*, whale; see G.

175. i.e. I'll travel round the world = "compass the globe" (IV. 1. 102). Editors quote Chapman's play, *Bussy D'Ambois* I. 1, "In tall ships richly built...To *put a Girdle round about the world*"; and other plays. Hence the expression either was or became proverbial.

176. *forty;* used constantly by Elizabethans, apparently as a significant number, where no precise reckoning was needed. Cf. *Sonnet* 2, "When forty winters shall besiege thy brow," and *Coriolanus*, III. 1. 243, "I could beat forty of them." Other numbers, e.g. 3 and 13, have become significant through some ancient belief or historical event; and perhaps 40 gained some mysterious import through the Scripture. Thus the wanderings of the Israelites lasted forty years, the fast of our Lord forty days—likewise the fast of Elijah (1 *Kings* xix. 8), and the stay of Moses on the Mount (*Exod.* xxiv. 18).

182. *the soul of love;* the most intense love.

184. *another herb* = "Dian's bud," IV. 1. 78.

190. *slay...slayeth.* The Quartos and Folios have *stay...stayeth.* In printers' type *sl* and *st* were then single letters (like *fi* and *fl* now), and the one might easily be mistaken for the other by the printer.

192. *and wood*, and mad; see G. The pun is obvious.

195. *adamant*, lodestone; see G.

196, 197. i.e. in drawing (attracting) my heart you draw that which for its trueness is very steel. A poetic 'conceit' (see *Introduction*, p. xi).

199. *speak you fair*, speak kindly *to* you; a common phrase.

201. *nor;* the negative repeated for the sake of emphasis.

203. *spaniel*, a type of fawning submissiveness.

208. *worser;* often in Shakespeare; the double comparative expresses emphasis. Cf. the emphatic superlative, "most worst," *Winter's Tale*, III. 2. 180, "most boldest," *Julius Cæsar*, III. 1. 121.

214. *impeach*, expose to reproach.

220. *privilege*, protection. *for that*, because: a conjunction on

which *it is* depends. Some editors change the punctuation, removing the stop after *privilege* to the end of the line = 'Your virtue is my safeguard *as regards that*,' i.e. the danger pointed out by Demetrius.

224. *in my respect*, in my eyes, as I judge.

227. *brakes*, thickets.

230. Things are contrary: she follows him: he should follow her.

231. Daphne, a nymph, flying from Apollo, was changed into a laurel-tree (δάφνη), that she might escape him; so said the "story" in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I. 452—552.

232. *griffin*, a fabulous monster, supposed to have a head, wings and forelegs like those of an eagle, and to resemble a lion in the rest of its body. Apparently many people then believed that the griffin (which now lives only in the art of heraldry) did actually exist—say, somewhere in Central Asia, as Sir John Mandeville and other travellers reported. Low Lat. *griffus*, from classical Lat. *gryphus* = Gk. γρύψ.

235. *stay*, i.e. for. *questions*, talk, arguings.

243. *a heaven of hell;* cf. I. 1. 207.

244. *upon*, by; cf. "perish *on* my sword," II. 2. 107; though there the prep. indicates rather 'place where,' here the 'instrument by which.' For *upon* = 'in consequence of, by' (metaphorically), cf. *Much Ado*, IV. 1. 225, "she died upon his words" (i.e. was killed *by* them).

249. Perhaps *where* = a dissyllable; but I should take it as one syllable and make *wild thyme*, on which the voice dwells, = three syllables. Some texts print *whereon*. *blows*, blooms; Germ. *blühen*, to flower.

250. *ox-lips*, a kind of cowslip not often found wild. *nodding*, hanging its head as if in sleep. *grows;* the verb may be attracted in number to the nearer subject *violet*.

251. *luscious*, sweet; see G. Theobald proposed *lush*, to simplify the scansion. *woodbine*, honeysuckle; but see IV. 1. 47, note.

252. *musk-rose;* "called *Rosa Moschata*, of the smell of muske: in Italian *Rosa Moschetta:* in French *Roses Musques*, or *Muscadelles*"—Gerarde, *Herbal*, 1597 ed., p. 1086. He describes it as having a flower "of a white colour" with "certaine yellow seedes in the middle," and says that it "is of most writers reckoned among the wilde Roses." Apparently, therefore, the musk-rose that Shakespeare meant was a wild, hedgerow species such as might well grow among the wild flowers of Titania's bank, i.e. quite a distinct species from the musk-rose, with pink flowers, now cultivated in gardens. (Gerarde's *Herbal* was the standard work on botany in Shakespeare's time.)

eglantine, sweet briar; cf. Gerarde, "The Eglantine Rose...a kinde

of Dogs Rose...in English Eglantine, or Sweet Brier" (p. 1088). O. F. *aiglantine* is connected with *aiguille*, needle—i.e. the prickly tree.

253 *sometime of*, sometimes during.

254. *dances and delight*, delightful dances (i.e. of her attendant fairies); an example of *hendiadys*, the figure of speech whereby one idea is expressed by two nouns or verbs connected by a conjunction. Thus Vergil expresses 'cups of gold' by 'cups *and* gold.'

255. *throws*, i.e. *off*, 'casts'; the skin cast off is the 'slough.' *enamell'd*, smooth and variegated like enamel.

256. *Weed*, robe, garment; see G.

257. *streak*, touch softly, i.e. anoint.

263, 264. Cf. III. 2. 347—351 (where Puck explains his mistake).

266. *fond on*, foolishly in love with.

267. In *Lear*, III. 4. 121, the "foul fiend" comes forth "at curfew and walks *till the first cock*": then fairies and spirits went home.

Scene 2.

The scene is now changed to the locality of the "bank" just mentioned by Oberon (II. 1. 248—267).

1. *roundel*, dance in a circle; see G.

2. *the third part of a minute.* In the fairy-world, where everything is diminutive, even time is measured by the standard of shortness.

3. *canker*, a worm that eats into rosebuds; Lat. *cancer*, crab.

4. *rere-mice*, bats; still so called in the west of England; see G.

leathern wings; in the Midland counties "leathern wings" is a name for the bat; cf. Germ. *ledermus*, leather-mouse.

7. *quaint*, dainty, pretty; see G. *spirits;* probably = fairies.

8. *offices*, duties, employments, i.e. those mentioned above.

9. *double*, i.e. forked; cf. III. 2. 72.

11. Neither the *newt* (a kind of lizard—see G.) nor the *blind-worm* (i.e. slow-worm) is harmful; but both were then thought to be venomous; cf. Herrick, "Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee" (*Hesperides*, 1648, "The Night-piece"). The witches' cauldron in *Macbeth*, IV. 1, has "eye of newt" and "blind-worm's sting."

13. *Philomel = Philomela*, a classical name of the nightingale.

14. *lullaby;* see G.

20, 25. The Folios assign the parts of the song thus.

20, 21. *spiders*, especially the field spider to which Titania would

be exposed, are to be warded off because they also were considered venomous. Old medical writers and herbalists mention remedies for their bites; e.g. Turner (*Herbal*, 1568) recommends *sothernwood* as "good to be dronken in wine against the bitinges...of the feld [i.e. field] spider and of a scorpione." The insect was thought to suck the poison from flowers; cf. Lyly's *Euphues* (Arber, p. 100), "Is not poyson taken out of the Hunnysuckle by the Spider? venym out of the *Rose* by the *Cancker?*"—(cf. l. 3, note). The notion is seen in the A. S. word for spider, viz. *attor-coppa* = poison-cup.

27—34. Cf. II. 1. 7. These so-called 'trochaic' lines have a dainty, tripping rhythm most appropriate to dainty fairy beings. Note how often, for this reason, Shakespeare makes his fairies speak in this verse. See especially Act V., from l. 378 to the end.

30. *ounce*, a kind of lynx (*felis uncia*). Perhaps *ounce* is a nasalised form of Persian *yúz*, a panther or lynx. *cat*, wild cat; probably what was called the *cat-o'-mountain* (*Tempest* IV. 262).

31. *Pard*, leopard.

35—38. Alternate rhyme = a quatrain is a sure sign of early work; cf. III. 2. 122—125. *troth;* see G. *comfort;* cf. III. 2. 432.

45. i.e. do not mistake my innocent meaning.

46. i.e. true lovers understand each other instinctively: no mutual suspicion makes them misinterpret each other's words.

49. *interchained*, linked together; cf. *knit*, 47. The Folios have *interchanged*, i.e. exchanged.

52. A pun on *lie* = (1) lie down, (2) tell a lie. He is replying to Hermia's "do not lie" in l. 44.

54. *beshrew;* 'alas for my (ill) manners if etc.'

57. *human*, courteous, kind; the same word as *humane*.

58, 59. i.e. such as may well be said *to* become (= befit).

61. *ne'er alter*, may it never alter; the optative or imperative use of the subjunctive was commoner then than now; cf. *end*, 63.

65. i.e. she does not want *all* the sleep: he may have half.

66—83. Again a metre with inverted stresses and extra syllable, to be scanned thus: "Bút A|thénian | foúnd I | nóne."

68. *approve*, test; Lat. *probare*, to try, prove.

71—75. See II. 1. 260—64. Of course Oberon meant Demetrius and Helena; but as Lysander and Hermia too wear "weeds (dress) of Athens," by which Puck was to recognize the lovers, his mistake is natural (so he pleads, III. 2. 347—51).

73. *Despised*, i.e. *that* despised; Shakespeare often omits the relative

where the sense leaves it clear what the subject of the verb is. It is another instance of Shakespearian brevity (cf. II. 1. 146, note).

77. It seems best to scan the line thus: "Near thís | lack-lóve |, this kíll | -court'sỳ." The first *this* may be stressed because said with emphatic contempt—Puck pointing at Lysander. The syllable that immediately follows a strongly accented syllable is liable to lose its own stress: hence the stress on *lóve*, not *lack*. Where a word occurs twice in the same line it is generally accented differently: hence the second *this* is unaccented, the stress falling on *kíll*.

Shakespeare often intermingles an inverted rhythm with its opposite. Line 77 treated as above will correspond with l. 74:

"And hére | the mái|den sléep|ing sóund."

78—81. *Churl*, boorish fellow. *owe*, possess. *his*, its.

86—88. *darkling*, in the dark. *fond*, foolish; see each in G.

89. *my grace*, the favour shown me, i.e. by Demetrius.

97. i.e. fly my presence as that of a monster.

99. *compare with*, seek to rival. *sphery*, starlike, celestial.

101. In *Richard II.* III. 2. 139 *wound* rhymes with *ground*.

103. *run through fire*=do anything; a proverbial figure of speech to express devotion; again in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, III. 4. 107.

104. *shows art;* so the Quartos; the 1st Folio has *Nature her shewes art*, the 2nd *here shews art*. Some editors adapt the 1st Folio reading and print *Nature shows her art*. Probably he quibbles (105) on *bosom*='front folds of the dress, stomacher'; cf. *Twelth N.* III. 1. 132.

111. The speech is a specimen of the strained style, dealing in somewhat affected diction (cf. 119, 120), and fanciful thoughts (cf. 121, 122), which is not uncommon in Shakespeare's early works.

114. *raven...dove.* A proverbial contrast (cf. *Twelfth Night*, v. 134); *raven* also alludes to Hermia's dark complexion (cf. III. 2. 257).

118. *I...ripe not*, I have not been mature enough. *ripe*, a verb.

119. i.e. now that I reach the highest point—the full development—of intelligence. *skill*, sagacity, mental discernment.

120. *marshal*, leader, director.

121. *o'erlook*, read, peruse.

126. *nor never;* emphatic repetition, as in II. 1. 201.

128. *flout*, mock at; cf. III. 2. 327.

129. *Good troth; in* good troth (truth). *sooth*=truth; cf. *forsooth*.

132. *gentleness*, kindness, or 'good breeding'; cf. *gentleman*.

133, 134. Note *of*=*by* after a passive verb; a common idiom then.

139, 140. *heresies*, false doctrines. Experience shows that converts to a belief are often more zealous in its behalf than its old adherents (and proportionately more bitter against their own former belief).

143. *address*, direct, i.e. towards the purpose mentioned.

149. *eat;* the past tense=*ate* (which Shakespeare never writes).

150. *prey*, the act of preying.

153. *an if;* see G.

154. *of all loves;* an adjuration used several times by Shakespeare; cf. the Quarto (1622) in *Othello*, III. 1. 13, "he desires you, *of all loves*, to make no more noise," where the Folio reading, *for love's sake*, shows the meaning of the phrase. Probably the original notion was '*out* of'—as in the formula "of your charity"; then 'for the sake of,' 'by.'

ACT III.

Scene 1.

We should observe how Shakespeare follows his usual plan of bringing the complications developed in the first two Acts to a crisis in the third Act (i.e. about the middle of the piece). In this play we have had two sets of complications: (1) the troubles of the lovers, and the anointment of Lysander's eyes; (2) the dispute between Titania and Oberon, and the anointment of Titania's eyes. Therefore we may expect two crises—and we get them: (1) in this scene, the meeting of Titania and Bottom, whence strange results; (2) in the next scene, the meeting of the pairs of lovers, whence also strange results. And in each case the main cause of confusion is the love-juice.

2. *pat, pat*, exactly, just as it should be. See G.

4. *tiring-house*, where the actors changed their *attire* (dresses).

8. Cf. 67, 68, and note how Bottom is appealed to in any difficulty. *bully Bottom*='friend Bottom.' See G.

14. *By'r lakin=by our ladykin* ('little lady'), a diminutive of *by'r lady=by our lady*, i.e. the Virgin Mary. Cf. *marry*, I. 2. 11, note.

parlous, alarming; a corruption in popular speech of *perilous*.

16. *when all is done*, after all; cf. 'when all is said and done.'

21. *more better;* the emphatic double comparative; cf. *Tempest* I. 2. 19, 20, "I am more better than Prospero."

25. *eight and six*, i.e. syllables—that is, alternate verses of four and three feet. It was a very common ballad-measure; cf. many of the ballads in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, e.g. the later version of the famous *Chevy Chace*—that which Addison criticised in the *Spectator*, 70, 74, and which runs throughout in this metre, thus:

"Erle Douglas on his milke-white steede,
Most like a baron bold,
Rode foremost of his company,
Whose armour shone like gold."

27. *eight and eight*, i.e. lines of four feet, also a favourite measure of simple, popular verse; cf. e.g. *St George and the Dragon* in Percy's *Reliques*, and the famous "King Stephen was a worthy peer." In Elizabethan England a love of such poetry seems to have been common to all classes, and Bottom and his friends, though nominally Athenians, are really Elizabethan working-folk. Hence their mention of these familiar metres is natural. We shall find later that the prologue is in lines of five feet (v. 108 *et seq.*).

28—33. *the ladies be afeard*. See I. 2. 77, note.

33. *your;* on this colloquial use see I. 2. 95, note.

36—47. Malone pointed out that Bottom's advice may have been suggested by an incident which occurred at those festivities held at Kenilworth in 1575 in honour of Queen Elizabeth to which lines 148—154 of Act II. Sc. I. are thought to refer.

The incident is related thus in the *Harleian MS.* 6395, in a collection of *Merry Passages & Jeasts* by Sir Nicholas L'Estrange (died 1669): "There was a spectacle presented to Q. Elizabeth vpon the water, and amongst others, Harry Goldingham was to represent Arion vpon the Dolphin's backe; but finding his voice to be very hoarse and unpleasant when he came to performe it, he teares of [*off*] his disguise, and sweares he was none of Arion; not he! but eene honest Harry Goldingham,—which blunt discoverie pleas'd the Queene better then [*than*] if it had gone through in the right way. Yet he could order his voice to an instrument exceedingly well." In view of II. 1. 148—154 I think it highly probable that Malone's suggestion is correct. If *Midsummer-N. D.* was ever performed before Elizabeth (as it surely was), she and many of her courtiers must have appreciated the point of the allusion.

40. *defect*, for *effect;* Gobbo makes a similar blunder, *Merchant of Venice*, II. 2. 152.

44. *pity of*, pity *for*=a bad thing for; cf. v. 230 (where *on*=*of*).

54. *almanac.* Almanacs are mentioned by an English writer (Roger Bacon) as early as 1267; but popular calendars such as Bottom meant were not in general use in this country till about 1550.

56. *it doth shine.* As the wedding of Theseus was to take place on the night of the new moon (I. 1. 9—11), there would certainly be a very scanty allowance of moonshine.

58. *great chamber*, the 'state-room' of the palace.

60. *or else.* This plan is adopted (see v. 136, 243).

61. *bush of thorns.* See v. 136, note.

62. *disfigure;* he means *figure* (cf. I. 1. 237). *present*=represent; a common use—cf. *Tempest* IV. 167, "when I presented Ceres."

71. *rough-cast*, a kind of plaster mixed with pebbles.

73. *cranny*, chink; see v. 164, note.

78. *cue*, catchword; it is the technical term on the stage for "words which when spoken at the end of a speech in the course of a play are the signal for an answering speech, or for the entrance of another actor." Thus in 98 the signal for Pyramus to re-enter was "never tire." See G.

79. *hempen home-spuns*, sons of toil in rough smocks. Cf. Volumnia's contemptuous description of the "people" (*plebs*) as "*woollen* vassals," *Coriolanus*, III. 2. 9. Suffolk was famous for the manufacture of hempen shirtings, smocks etc.

81. *toward*=about to begin. Cf. *Hamlet*, v. 2. 376.

84, 85. *odious...odours;* a stock joke; cf. Dogberry's "comparisons are *odorous*," *Much Ado*, III. 5. 18. "Flowers of odours" for "odours of flowers" is also meant as a joke. *savour-s*; an instance of the *plural* inflection *es* or *s* in Old English (see p. 166).

87. *hath;* Pope *doth*, i.e. doth savour. But why correct lines the point of which lies mainly in their incorrectness and absurdity?

90. Bottom when he reappears will be "a stranger Pyramus," because Puck means to play some trick on him during his absence.

97. *brisky*, brisk; *juvenal*, youth (Lat. *juvenis*); *eke*, also. They are affected words or forms which Shak. ridicules. Here and in *Love's Labour's Lost*, III. 136, "my incony Jew," perhaps *Jew=jewel.*

105. *with an ass's head.* We must remember that witches were popularly supposed to have the power of working such transformations. Hence the more simple-minded portion of an Elizabethan audience would not regard the change in Bottom's appearance as the humorous impossibility that it seems to us. (See *Introduction*, p. xxxii.)

109—114. The passage is entirely in accordance with the traditional character of Robin Goodfellow (see *Introduction*, p. xxx.). That spirits

sometimes took the forms of animals was a mediæval superstition oft alluded to (e.g. by Milton in *Paradise Lost*).

112. *a fire*, i.e. a misleading light (*ignis fatuus*); see II. 1. 39.

119. *you see an ass-head of your own, do you?* This was a cant Elizabethan phrase; that Bottom should use it, unconscious the while of his own condition, is excellent humour (tragi-comic 'irony').

122. *translated*, transformed, changed; so in III. 2. 32.

124. *to make an ass of me*, i.e. to make me seem a fool, stupid fellow; the same humour of unconsciousness as in 120.

128, 129, *ousel;* blackbird; see G. *orange-tawny;* cf. I. 2. 96.

130. *throstle;* a diminutive of *thrush*, but the same in sense.

131. *little*, shrill="small" (1. 2. 52). *quill*, pipe; see G.

134. i.e. the cuckoo, whose note is simple and monotonous. Though used here as an adjective, *plain-song* is strictly a noun, and means 'a simple melody without variations.' See G.

137. *set his wit to*, match it against; cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, II. 1. 94, "Will you set your wit to a fool's?"

138. *give...the lie*, charge with falsehood.

139. *cry 'cuckoo';* the bird's note was popularly thought to warn husbands mockingly of the ill-behaviour of their wives; cf. *Love's L. L.* v. 2. 908, 909, "The cuckoo then, on every tree, Mocks married men."

143. *thy fair virtue*, the virtue of thy fairness (beauty); see I. 1. 80, note. *virtue*, efficacy, power; see *virtuous* in G.

147. *reason and love*. Cf. the old proverb that 'a man cannot love and be wise,' from the maxim, *amare et sapere vix deo conceditur*.

150. i.e. I can jest when I choose to. *gleek*, see G.

161. *jewels*, e.g. pearls, coral; cf. "sea's rich gems," *Sonnet* 21.

163, 164. She will make Bottom's mortal (and rather solid) frame as light and ethereal as that of a spirit of the air.

169. *apricocks*, apricots; see G. *dewberries*, the fruit of the dewberry bush, a kind of bramble; they resemble small blackberries.

171. Herrick (*Hesperides*, 1648) makes "well bestrutted [=swollen] bees' sweet bag" one of the dainties in "Oberon's Feast." Was it a traditional article of fairy-diet, or did Herrick merely imitate Shakespeare? The *honey-bag* is the receptacle in which the bee carries her honey; see again IV. 1. 13.

173. Cf. Herrick, "The Night-piece," "Her *eyes* the glow-worm lend thee," and "Oberon's Palace," where he describes how 'The glow-worm's *eyes*...serve here for shine" (i.e. to illuminate the fairy-palace). Again we wonder whether Herrick recollected *Midsummer-N. D.*, or whether

both poets simply drew on popular folklore. Strictly, the light is situate in the tail of the female glow-worm.

174. *have*, get, bring; connect it with *to bed* and *to arise*. The general sense is—'to attend my love at bed-time and at his rising.'

182. *cry...mercy*, beg pardon; a common phrase.

185. Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, IV. 1. 402, "I do desire your grace of pardon." In this common expression *desire*=ask, entreat (as often in Shakespeare), and *of*='as regards'; so the literal sense of Bottom's words is, 'I shall entreat you in respect of closer acquaintance.'

187. *Cobweb;* an old-fashioned remedy to stop effusion of blood.

191. *Squash*, an unripe peascod (=the pod or husk that holds the peas); cf. *Twelfth Night* I. 5. 165—67, "Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy; as a squash is before 'tis a peascod."

197. *your patience*, i.e. submissiveness under the misfortune of being devoured by the cowardly giant, ox-beef: which misfortune (not, of course, the pungent strength of the mustard!) has often brought the tears into Bottom's eyes (l. 200)—a quibble that explains itself.

200. *desire you of more.* The Quartos, and Folios 1 and 2, have *you more.* Some insert *of*, as in 185, 193, which seems to me best; others print *your more*, the reading of Folios 3 and 4.

205. *enforced*, violated.

Scene 2.

The "Story of the Play" in the *Introduction* (xlv—xlvii) makes clear the plot of this rather difficult scene.

2. *next*, i.e. immediately after she awoke='first.'

5. *night-rule;* see G.

7. *close*, private, retired.

9. *patches*, clowns; see G. *mechanicals*, mechanics, workmen.

13. *shallowest*, most stupid. Puck judges Bottom too hastily; his comrades regard him as their leader, with "the best wit" (IV. 2. 10).

thick-skin; then a common term of reproach='block-head.'

barren, i.e. of brains='dull.' *sort*, company; see G.

14. *presented*, represented; cf. III. 1. 62, 69.

17. *nole*, rather a vulgar word for 'head,' like 'noddle' or 'pate.' The same as *knoll*, a hillock. Also spelt *nowl;* cf. the duplicate forms *jole* and *jowl*='a cheek' (see 338, note).

19. *mimic*, actor; see G.

21. Note (1) *choughs*=jackdaws, (2) *russet-pated*=grey- (*not* red-) headed: a remarkably precise description of the jackdaw, which has

grey plumage about the head and neck. For *russet*='grey,' see G. The change *russet-patted*, 'red-legged,' *à pattes rousses* (which would be applicable to the Cornish chough, not to the jackdaw) is needless.

many in sort, in a great body. *sort;* cf. l. 13, *supra*.

25. It has been objected that diminutive fairies could not be said to *stamp;* but why not, if they could "rock the ground" (IV. 1. 91)?

26. *he*, one; almost='another.'

36. *latch'd*, moistened. "To 'latch with love-juice' is to drop love-juice upon, to distil upon,...or simply to moisten" (Skeat). See G.

40. *of force*, of necessity; commonly *perforce*, as in l. 90.

41. *Stand close*, stand still, keep quiet.

44. *breath*, words; cf. IV. 2. 44.

48. *o'er shoes;* then a not uncommon phrase='somewhat.' It implies entering into a thing, but not very far, e.g. like a person wading a little way into water. Cf. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I. 1. 24, "more than over shoes in love." i.e. rather deeply.

54. *centre*=the middle point of the earth; cf. Ben Jonson, *Catiline*, v. 6, "strike it through the *centre*, to the *Antipodes*."

55. *her brother's*, i.e. the sun's. *with the Antipodes*, among the people living on the opposite side of the globe. *Antipodes*, see G.

57. *dead*, deadly; or perhaps 'deathlike.'

61. *Venus*, i.e. the planet; cf. 107.

62. *What's this to*, what has this to do with?

70. *brave touch*, a fine thing to do, a noble exploit (or 'stroke')!

71. *worm*, serpent; used in *Antony and Cleopatra* of the asp (serpent) with which Cleopatra killed herself (v. 2. 243, 256).

72. *doubler;* see II. 2. 9.

74. *on a mispris'd mood*, in mistaken anger; or, on a mistaken fancy. Probably the former; it is more suitable to *mood*=feeling (i.e. of anger, as the context shows). *mispris'd*, see G.

78. *An if;* see *an* in G. *therefore*, for that, i.e. in return.

81. *whether;* often in Shakespeare metrically=a monosyllable.

84, 85. In plain prose—'loss of sleep (in which sorrow may be forgotten—cf. l. 435) makes sorrow harder to bear.'

86. *Which*, the debt, i.e. respite from sorrow. *it*, sleep.

87. *his tender*, the offer that sleep will make. *his*, its; see G.

90. *misprision*, mistake; see G., and cf. *mispris'd* above (74).

91. *Some true love turned*, i.e. turned false. *We* have already seen (though Oberon has not) how Puck's mistake has made Lysander false to Hermia (II. 2. 103—144).

92, 93. 'If (Puck means) some lover is to prove faithless because of *my* error, not through his own fickleness, lovers in general must not be held responsible for their faithlessness. The fault lies with fate, which ordains that for every one who is true there should be a million who break (="confound") oath after oath.'

96. *fancy-sick*, love-sick; see II. 1. 164. *cheer*, face; see G.

97. It was believed in Shakespeare's time that every sigh cost the person a drop of blood. Cf. "*blood-consuming* sighs" and "*blood-drinking* sighs," *2 Henry VI.* III. 2. 61, 63.

costs; in Shak. a singular verb often follows a relative pronoun with plural antecedent, perhaps because the relative has no plural inflection.

99. *against*, i.e. so as to be ready for the time when. Cf. *Genesis* xliii. 25, "And they made ready the present against Joseph came."

101. *Tartar;* taken as a type of archer. In the geography of that time 'Tartary' included the ancient Parthia, and the Parthians were proverbial for their skill as bowmen.

102, 103. See II. 1. 165—168.

107. *the Venus;* cf. 61, note.

113. *fee*, payment.

114. *fond pageant*, foolish show. *pageant;* much the same as 'exhibition' in our colloquial phrase 'to make an *exhibition* of oneself.'

119. *needs*, of necessity; see G. *alone*, above all things—'without a parallel' (Schmidt). Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. 6. 30, "I am alone the villain of the earth," i.e. without a rival.

121. *preposterously*, perversely.

124. *vows so born*, vows being so born; an absolute construction.

127. *the badge*, i.e. his tears. *badge*=token, mark: an allusion to the silver badges, engraved with their masters' crests, that servants of the nobility used to wear on the sleeves of their liveries.

129. Lysander once said that his vows to Hermia were true: now he says that his vows to Helena are true: the one truth conflicts with the other, and such a conflict is at once good and bad ("devilish-holy"): good because one truth wins, and it is well that truth should prevail; bad because the other truth is beaten, and it is ill that truth should ever fail. The line is simply one of Shakespeare's early 'conceits'; see II. 2. 111, note. In the next lines Helena changes her argument and says that his conflicting oaths (the two 'truths') will prove evenly matched, i.e. equally worthless.

131. *nothing weigh*, i.e. ascertain, or fix, no weight, because his oaths to her and to Hermia will exactly counterbalance each other.

141—143. i.e. 'that pure whiteness, viz. the snow of Mount Taurus, becomes black as a crow when thou etc.' Of course, *turns* is intransitive, *white* (=*whiteness*, as in 144) being the subject.

141. *That*=the famous, the well-known (Lat. *ille*).

Taurus, a mountain range in southern Asia Minor.

The comparison of a very white hand with "the *fann'd* snow" occurs again in *Winter's Tale*, IV. 4. 375.

144. *princess of*, perfection of, paragon of; cf. the similar use of *prince*, e.g. in *Troilus and Cressida*, I. 2. 249, "Brave Troilus! the prince of chivalry!" Collier's conjecture *impress*='stamp' (to conform with the metaphor of *seal*) is a needless change.

seal, pledge; with the hand she pledges faith to her lover.

150. *in souls*, heartily, with one accord.

153. *superpraise*, overpraise. *parts*, qualities, gifts.

157. *trim;* cf. the ironical use of 'pretty,' e.g. 'a pretty idea!'

169. *I will none*, i.e. none of her, nothing to do with her.

171. *to her*, in its relation to her; Johnson read "*with* her."

175. *aby*, pay for, suffer for; cf. 335 and see G.

188. *yon fiery oes*, the stars; *o* was used of anything that resembled the shape of the letter *o*; hence here='orb,' 'circle.' In *Henry V.*, *Prologue* 13, the Globe Theatre which was circular (whence perhaps the name) is called "this wooden *O*."

194. *false*, wicked. *in spite of*, so as to spite. Cf. *L'Allegro*, 45, "Then to come, in spite of sorrow," i.e. by way of spiting.

195. *Injurious*, insulting; see G.

197. *bait*, harass (as dogs 'bait' an animal).

201. I keep the reading of the Quartos and 1st Folio, making *O*, with the pause before it, equivalent to a whole foot. Cf. *Hamlet*, IV. 4. 65, "To híde | the sláin|. Ó, | from thís | time fórth." Abbott (482) gives similar instances. The 2nd Folio has "O, *and* is all."

203. *artificial;* here active='skilled in art, artful;' commonly passive='produced by art.' *gods*, because they "created" (l. 204).

204. *needles;* a monosyllable; cf. the old spelling *neeld* (in *Piers the Plowman*, *nelde*), which some editors print here. A.S. *nǽdl.*

205. *sampler*, wool-work in which patterns (i.e. *samples*) are designed—especially the alphabet. O.F. *examplaire*, Lat. *exemplar.*

208. *incorporate*, made one body; for *ate*=*ated* see v. 412, note.

210. *a union in partition*, i.e. at once united and parted.

212—214. Outwardly they had two bodies, inwardly one heart: so in heraldry the *double* coats of arms that belong to man and wife *as one*

person ("due but to one") have but *one* crest. The comparison is between '*two bodies...two coats*' and '*one heart...one crest.*'

213. *of the first*, of the *former*, i.e. bodies; an allusion to the heraldic terms 'the first,' 'the second' etc., used in descriptions of coats of arms to refer back to the divisions of a shield which have been already described. *like;* the original eds. have *life.*

215. Cf. *Mat.* vii. 6 (1611), "lest they...turn again and *rent* you."

220. *amazed*, utterly bewildered; a stronger word then than now.

229. *deny your love*, disown, disavow, his love of you.

232. *in grace*, in favour, i.e. so fortunate.

233. *hung upon;* the metaphor is 'clinging to' a person.

237. *persever.* Always spelt thus in the 1st Folio, with the accentuation *perséver*; cf. *King John* II. 421, "Perséver not, but hear me, mighty kings." *sad*, grave; see G.

238. *Make mouths upon*, i.e. in derision.

239. *hold...the jest up*=(colloquially) 'keep it going.'

242. *argument*, subject of mirth; see G.

247. *do not scorn;* said to Lysander; Hermia still thinks that he is true to her and merely made fun of Helena in 245, 246.

250. *prayers;* so Theobald; the Quartos and Folios *praise.*

257. *Away*, Lysander is trying to free himself of Hermia who has just caught hold of him to prevent his fighting with Demetrius.

Ethiop, a term of contempt, like "tawny Tartar" in 263; see G. In Elizabeth's reign it was the fashion to depreciate dark complexions and hair, probably out of compliment to the queen herself, who was fair.

257—259. Demetrius means that Lysander is not really trying to break loose from Hermia, i.e. that he is afraid to fight. He says with taunting irony: 'keep up the pretence; appear to wish to get free and follow me—though actually you are a coward (="tame"). This seems the sense intended, but, almost certainly, the text is corrupt, perhaps through some omission. The 1st Quarto has "No, no; heele Seeme" (i.e. two lines); the 2nd Quarto, "No, no, hee'l seeme" (i.e. one line); the Folios, "No, no, sir, seem" (i.e. one line).

258. *take on*, be angry, chafe. Cf. *Merry Wives*, IV. 2. 22, "he so takes on...so rails...so curses."

260. *burr*, the prickly, clinging head of the burdock plant.

264. *potion;* so the 1st Quarto; the 2nd and Folios *poison.*

267, 268. A quibbling word-play on *bond*=(1) contract, pledge, (2) tie, fetter, viz. Hermia, who still holds Lysander.

271. It is now that Hermia realises the change in Lysander.

272. *what news*, either, 'what new thing is this?', viz. that Lysander hates her; or, 'what has happened?' (i.e. which has made him change towards her). The proposal "what *means*" is tempting.

274. *erewhile*, a little while ago.

282. *you juggler*, i.e. Helena. Scan *júgg-e-lèr*. *canker-blossom*, the worm that eats into blossoms (see II. 2. 3, note). Hermia means that Helena has eaten into and destroyed Lysander's love for her.

286. *no touch*, not a particle; or perhaps = 'no feeling.'

291, 292. *urg'd*, dwelt on, emphasised. Scan 292: "And with | her pérs'|nage, hér | tall pér|sonáge." 295. *low*, short.

296. Various references in old writers show that a "painted maypole" was a familiar object in Shakespeare's time. One painted with vertical stripes of white, red, and blue, stood in a village (Welford) five miles from Stratford—perhaps a copy of an earlier pole there that Shakespeare himself may have seen. A maypole depicted on an old window dating possibly from the reign of Henry VIII., at Betley in Staffordshire, has (or had) diagonal lines of black on a ground of yellow.

300. *curst*, ill-tempered, shrewish; cf. 341 and see G.

302. *a right maid*, a true maid. A common Elizabethan use; cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. 12. 28, "like a right gipsy."

for, in respect of; cf. IV. 2. 12, V. 234.

307. *evermore*, always.

310. *your stealth*, your stealing away = going secretly.

317. *simple*, i.e. in intellect = 'silly'; cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. 1. 142, "a most simple clown!" *fond*, foolish; cf. II. 2. 88.

324. *vixen*, a bad-tempered, quarrelsome girl; see G.

329. *minimus*, tiny creature; see G. *knot-grass* (*Polygonum aviculare*); popularly supposed to hinder (cf. "hindering") the growth of a child or animal. Steevens quotes Beaumont and Fletcher, *Knight of the Burning Pestle* II. 2, "say they should put him into a strait pair of gaskins, 'twere worse than *knot-grass;* he would never *grow* after it."

330. *bead;* referring not only to her size (cf. "acorn"), but also to her complexion, the commonest sort of beads being black.

333. *intend*, direct, exhibit towards; or perhaps 'pretend'—cf. *Much Ado*, II. 2. 35, "intend a kind of zeal," i.e. feign.

336, 337. i.e. which of us has the better claim to Helena. Cf. *Tempest* II. 1. 27, "Which, *of* he *or* Adrian, first begins?" The phrase combines, (1) 'whose right, thine or mine,' (2) 'which *of* our rights.'

338. *cheek by jole*, cheek to cheek, i.e. side by side, close together. *jole*, also spelt *jowl;* cf. *nole* or *nowl* (I. 17, note).

339. i.e. all this turmoil is due to you. *coil*, see G.

340. Cf. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, v. 4. 132, "*I* care not for her, *I*." The repetition gives emphasis.

345. *still*, always, or constantly.

347. *shadows*, spirits; cf. v. 430.

348, 349. Cf. II. 1. 263, 264; II. 2. 71—73.

352. *sort*, fall out: "if it sort not well," *Much Ado*, IV. 1. 242.

353. *jangling*, quarrelling, wrangling.

355—357. It was a very old and widespread belief that fairies, spirits and magicians had the power to affect the heavenly bodies, especially the moon, and hide their light. Mediæval romances and poems are full of references—like these lines—to the superstition. Cf. Fairfax's translation (1600) of *Tasso* IX. 15, "The moon and stars for fear of sprites were fled."

356. *welkin*, sky; see G.

357. *Acheron*, one of the four rivers of the classical Hades (Hell). Cf. *Paradise Lost* II. 578, "Sad Acheron...*black* and deep."

358. *testy*, angry; Middle E. *testif*, headstrong; from O.F. *teste*, modern F. *tête*, 'head.'

359. *As*, that. *another*, the other.

364. Sleep has often (and naturally) been compared with death. Cf. Tennyson, *In Memoriam* LXVIII., "Sleep, Death's twin-brother."

365. *batty*, like those of a bat. Tennyson (*Maud* I. XXII) compares night with a bat—"For the black bat, night, has flown."

367. *liquor*, juice. *virtuous* [see G.] *property*, peculiar efficacy.

368. *his*, its; see G.

370, 371. Scan 'derís|*i*-ón', 'vís|*i*-ón.'

373. *date*, duration; cf. *King John*, iv. 3. 106, "my date of life."

379. Cf. *Cymbeline* II. 2. 48, "Swift, swift, you dragons of the night." In classical writers only Demeter (or Ceres), goddess of the Earth, is represented as being drawn in her chariot by dragons; cf. Ovid, *Fasti*, IV. 497, 561, 562. The chariot of Night (personified) is yoked with horses; cf. Statius, *Thebais* II. 60, *sopor obvius illi | Noctis agebat equos*. So Milton speaks of "the Night-*steeds*," *Nativity Ode*, 236. Minute accuracy in such matters is not to be required of a poet. Milton often varies mythology to suit his purpose.

dragons, winged serpents; as fabulous as the griffin (II. 1. 232).

380. *harbinger*, forerunner; see G. The morning-star is meant.

381—387. The 'spirits' meant here are not fairy beings (cf. Oberon's words, 388), but the restless 'ghosts' of the dead, such e.g.

as the ghost in *Hamlet*, who also 'fades' away at the approach of morning. See again v. 386—389.

382, 383. Formerly it was the custom to bury the bodies of executed criminals and self-murderers at cross-roads. Their spirits are here referred to; also those of persons "who, being drowned, were condemned (according to the opinion of the ancients) to wander for a hundred years, as the rites of sepulture had never been regularly bestowed on their bodies" (Steevens). Cf. the story of the sailor Archytas in Horace, *Odes* I. 28.

386. Shakespeare always accents the verb *exile;* the noun both *éxile* (as now) and *exile* (Lat. *exílium*). See I. 1. 151, note.

387. Cf. "Come, gentle...*black-brow'd* night," *Romeo*, III. 2. 20.

388. *another*, i.e. higher, "of no common rate" (III. 1. 157).

389. *Morning's love.* Aurora (cf. 380), Greek Eos, goddess of the morn, loved Cephalus; but he remained true to Procris, his wife—wherefore Pyramus takes him as a type of loyal affection (v. 200). If Oberon hunted with him it was probably on Mount Hymettus, near Athens, his favourite hunting-ground. (The reference might be to Tithonus, also beloved of Aurora; but this is less likely.)

391. *gate.* Cf. the image in *Psalm* xix. 5 of the Sun coming forth "out of his chamber."

402. *drawn*, i.e. with drawn sword.

404. *plainer*, more level. F. *plain*, level, Lat. *planus*, flat.

418. *rest me*, i.e. myself. "*Him, her, me, them*, etc. are often used in Elizabethan, and still more often in early English, for *himself, herself*, etc."—Abbott, 223. Cf. "I do repent me," *Macbeth*, II. 3. 112; so "repent you" in the Prologue (113) in Act. v. The addition of *self* (='same') only emphasises the reflexive sense.

421. *Ho, ho, ho;* the traditional cry of Robin Goodfellow or Puck; in the old ballad *The Pranks of Puck* each stanza closes with it, thus: "I answer nought, but ho, ho, ho!" (Puck is the speaker).

422. *I wot*, I know; see G.

426. *buy*, pay for; the metaphor of *aby*.

435, 436. *And sleep...Steal*, i.e. and *may* sleep steal.

437—441. The measure has three feet, with an extra syllable at the end. Scan *three* (437) as a dissyllable; likewise *comes* (439)—thus: "Yét but | *thrée*? | Cóme one | móre;" and "Hére she | *cómes*, | cúrst and | sád." See II. 1. 58, note.

461. A proverbial expression for a happy ending (i.e. with a wedding) to a play or tale; cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 884, 885:

"Our wooing doth not end like an old play;
Jack hath not Jill."

The association of *Jack* and *Jill* as generic names for a man and woman is very old (and familiar to all from the nursery-rhyme).

463. Another ancient proverb; it occurs in Ray's *Proverbs*, 1670.

ACT IV.

Scene 1.

As a rule, the IVth Act is the least important in the scheme of one of Shakespeare's plays. It often marks a pause after a great crisis in the complications, and merely indicates how their solution is likely to be attained: the solution itself, i.e. the 'catastrophe,' being reserved for the Vth Act. But in *Midsummer Night's Dream* the IVth Act is very important, because in it, as we shall see, the two sets of complications that formed the main subject-matter of Acts II. and III. are practically brought to an issue, and the marriage of Theseus is celebrated. Thus the way is cleared for the performance in Act V. of the 'interlude' in honour of the marriage.

2. Scan '*ámi-áble*' as four syllables (see I. 1. 152, note). *coy*, caress; literally 'to make still or *quiet*'; *coy* and *quiet* both come from Lat. *quietus*, the former indirectly through O.F. *coi*, the latter directly. Spenser uses *accoy*=caress, *Faerie Queene*, IV. 8. 59.

8. *Mounsieur*; cf. the corruption of *monsieur* into *mounseer*.

13. *honey-bag*, see III. 1. 171, note.

17. *overflown*, drowned. Milton uses *flown* as the p. p. of *flow*; cf. *Paradise Lost*, I. 502, "*flown* with insolence and wine," i.e. 'flushed.'

20. *neaf*, or *neif*, fist; rather a rustic word.

21. *leave your courtesy*. Probably Mustard-seed is bowing (as Titania commanded, III. 1. 177), and Bottom desires him to cease. Schmidt takes it='put on your hat'; but did fairies wear hats?

25. *Cavalery Cobweb*; it should be Pease-blossom (cf. 5—7); Cobweb has been sent to get the humble-bee. Either Bottom or the printer is in error. *Cavalery*, see G.

31. In attributing to Bottom ("the weaver") "a reasonable good ear in music," Shakespeare probably refers, with a touch of sarcasm, to the fact that weavers were supposed to be a musical race, addicted to

singing, especially psalm-singing (many of them being Calvinist refugees from the Netherlands). A similar reference is 1 *Henry IV.* II. 4. 147. Cf. Tennyson's *Queen Mary*, III. 4, "Ay, the psalm-singing weavers, cobblers, scum" (said by the Roman Catholic Gardiner).

Rough music. So Dyce; a direction of some kind seems desirable, to show that music is sounded. The Folios have "Musick Tongs, Rural Musick"; the Quartos no direction.

"The music of the *tongs* was produced, I believe, by striking them with a key" (Dyce). The *bones*, no doubt, were rattled in the manner practised by nigger minstrels.

35—38. *a peck of provender* etc.; see *Appendix*, p. 153 note.

36. *your;* the same familiar use as in I. 2. 95.

37. *bottle*, a bundle; see G.

38. *fellow*, equal, rival.

40. *new*=a dissyllable. Some editors insert *thence* after *thee*.

43. *exposition;* most likely he means *disposition*.

46. *all ways*, in all directions.

47, 48. Here I take *woodbine*=convolvulus; not=honeysuckle, as in II. 1. 251. The passage is much disputed; see pp. 150, 151.

48, 49. Classical poets often speak of the *vine* as married to the elm because trained to cling to its stem and branches for support. Shakespeare applies a similar thought to *ivy*, though the 'marriage' is rather implied ("female...enrings...fingers") than definitely expressed. Cf. Horace's *lascivae hederae*, 'wanton ivy' (*Odes* I. 36. 20).

54. *favours*, presents, as in II. 1. 12; i.e. nosegays of flowers.

56. Cf. *Richard II.* III. 2. 160, 161, "the hollow *crown* That *rounds* the mortal *temples* of a king," i.e. encircles.

58, 59. *dew...pearls;* cf. I. 1. 211. *orient*, lustrous; see G.

63. *patience;* scan as in I. 1. 152, 'páti-énce' (i.e. three syllables).

71. *other*=others (viz. the lovers); a frequent Elizabethan use; cf. the *Prayer-Book*, *Psalm* xlix. 10, "For he seeth that wise men also die ...and leave their riches for *other*." In Old English *other* was declined and made its plural *othre:* when the plural inflexion *e* became obsolete, *othre* became obsolete, and for a time *other* was used for both singular and plural: this proved confusing, and a fresh plural *others* was formed by adding the ordinary plural suffix *-s*.

72. *may all*, all may.

74. *a dream;* see 197—199, note. *fierce*, wild, disordered.

78. *Dian's bud;* probably Shakespeare means the bud of the *Agnus Castus* or Chaste-tree, then popularly thought to have the

power of inspiring chastity. *The Flower and The Leaf*, attributed to Chaucer, specially associates this shrub with Diana (ll. 472—5):

"That is Diane, goddesse of chastite,
And for because that she a maiden is,
In her own hond [*hand*] the braunch she beareth iwis,
That *agnus castus* men calle properly."

Burton mentions "Vitex or Agnus castus" among remedies for "Love-Melancholy" as having "a wonderful virtue," i.e. efficacy (*Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1806 ed. II. 354). Possibly this association of the tree with chastity was due to false etymology. The Greek name was ἄγνος; this was confused with ἁγνός, 'chaste,' whence the Latin title *Agnus Castus*. It was also called *Abraham's Balm*. (See *Appendix*, p. 151.)

Cupid's flower, the pansy, "love-in-idleness," II. I. 168.

87. The Quartos, and Folios 1 and 2, have, "Than common sleepe: of all these, *fine* etc." Theobald made the correction. *five*, i.e. Bottom and the two pairs of lovers.

88. *charmeth*, produces as by a charm.

Music, still, i.e. music sounds softly. *still*, an adverb. Probably some stringed instruments, with flutes, would be used.

90. Here probably louder music is sounded, in answer to Oberon's "Sound, Music!", and he and Titania execute some kind of dance.

91. *rock*, move up and down like a cradle.

92. *new in amity*, friends again. *new*=renewed.

93—95. See V. 398—427. *solemnly*, with due ceremony.

95. *prosperity;* so the 1st Quarto; the 2nd and Folios *posterity*.

100. *sad*, grave; see G.

102. Cf. Puck's "I'll put a girdle etc.," II. I. 175.

103. *Swifter than* etc.; cf. II. I. 6, 7. *wandering;* cf. Shelley's picture (in the lines "Art thou pale etc.") of the moon

"Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth."

It is one of those epithets that become 'perpetual' or traditional because precisely suitable. So for Horace (cf. *vaga Luna—Sat.* I. 8. 21) and Milton (*Il Penseroso*, 67) the moon is the wanderer of the heavens.

109. *observation=observance* in I. I. 167. Of course it is an anachronism to associate Theseus thus with May-day ceremonies. Shakespeare is thinking of Elizabethan England, not of the classical Athens. Similar inconsistencies occur in his tragedies of Roman history, *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

110. i.e. since it is still early. *vaward*, forepart; see G.

111—116. *The Knight's Tale* (815—824) represents Theseus as very fond of hunting the stag, especially during *May*, accompanied by his "fayre queene", Hippolyta. Perhaps this gave Shakespeare a hint for the present hunting-scene.

115, 116. For the scansion cf. I. 1. 149, note.

117, 118. Legend associated *Hippolyta* variously with *Hercules*. Perhaps she mentions him here out of compliment to Theseus, his "kinsman" (v. 47). The reference to his hunting in *Crete* may be due to the tradition that he rid the island of wild beasts, after he had captured the Cretan bull. At any rate, this last exploit connected him with the island, which was familiar (as Hippolyta doubtless knew) to Theseus also: there Theseus slew the Minotaur. Shakespeare has some method therefore in these allusions; but why he introduces *Cadmus*, the founder of Thebes, into the company, I cannot say—nor whether there ever were bears in Crete (which some editors deny, substituting *boar*).

118. *bay'd*, drove to bay; see G.

119. *Spartan* and *Cretan* (cf. 131) hounds were both celebrated. Ovid, describing the hounds of the famous hunter, Actæon, says that one was of Spartan breed, another of Cretan, and a third a cross between the two breeds (*Metamorphoses*, III. 208, 223). Probably it was from Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses*—a favourite book with him—that Shakespeare gained his knowledge on the subject. Ben Jonson in *The Satyr* has, "The dog of *Sparta* breed, and good."

120. *chiding*, barking. Shakespeare uses *chide* of a resounding noise, e.g. of a blustering wind, *As You Like It*, II. 1. 7.

121. *fountains*, springs; an obvious suggestion is *mountains*. Crete is a mountainous island.

124—131. The number of words connected with hounds and the chase deserves notice. There is a similar passage in Lyly's comedy *Mydas* (1592), IV. 3: "Such as you are unworthy to be...huntsmen; that know not when a hound is fleet, faire *flewd*, and well hanged [i.e. with long ears]; being ignorant of the deepenesse of a hound's *mouth*, and the *sweetness*" [cf. "a cry more *tuneable*, 129].

125. *so flew'd*, having the same kind of flews = the large overhanging lip of the upper jaw of hounds and certain other dogs. Cf. the extract from Lyly's *Mydas*, above.

so sanded, of the same sandy colour.

127. *dew-lapp'd*, with flesh hanging from the throat; see II. 1. 50.

128, 129. i.e. matched in sound, like a chime of bells, successively

lower and lower. It was a point considered in selecting hounds for a pack that their notes should form a harmonious 'cry.'

129. *cry*, pack of hounds; see G.

130. The noun *holla*, or *hallo*, = the huntsman's call to his hounds.

132. *But, soft!* hold, stop!

136. *wonder of*, i.e. *at;* cf. "admire *of*," I. 1. 231.

139. *in grace of*, in honour of.

140, 141. See I. 1. 83—90.

144, 145. *Saint Valentine*, i.e. his day, viz. February 14th. It was a popular notion that on this day the birds selected their mates. Cf. Drayton, 'To his Valentine':

"Each bird doth choose a mate,
This day's St Valentine's."

The allusion is another anachronism.

147. *you two*, Lysander and Demetrius.

151—158. The confused style of the speech reflects Lysander's confused state. So in *Paradise Lost*, v. 30 *et seq.*, when Eve wakes from her agitating dream, she begins by speaking in abrupt sentences.

152. *sleep* = sleeping. Shakespeare often makes one termination serve for a pair of words. Cf. *Sonnet* 80, "The humble as the proudest sail," i.e. humble*st*; *Cymbeline*, IV. 2. 347, "I fast and pray'd," i.e. fast*ed*; *Julius Cæsar*, II. 1. 224, "fresh and merrily," i.e. fresh*ly*.

156—158. Cf. what Lysander said to Hermia when he proposed that she should "steal" away from Athens, I. 1. 159—163.

157. *we might;* the sentence is incomplete: Egeus interrupts.

158. *without the peril of*, beyond danger of. For the opposite cf. *Merchant of Venice*, IV. 1. 180, "you stand *within* his danger."

159. *you have enough*, i.e. evidence against Lysander.

162. *defeated*, defrauded.

168. *in fancy*, moved by love.

176, 177. Cf. what Lysander said of Demetrius, I. 1. 106, 107.

184. *overbear*, overrule.

187. *for*, because. Since l. 110 some time has elapsed.

194. *These things*, their recent experiences. *parted*, divided.

196, 197. She has recovered Demetrius, but still feels insecure in her possession of him; just as a man feels insecure in his possession of a jewel which he has found, and which the owner may claim.

197—199. To all the victims of the fairies' tricks the events of the night afterwards seem a dream—alike to the lovers and to Bottom (cf. 210—212). So Oberon promised (III. 2. 370, 371).

210. *a most rare vision.* Cf. Titania's words in 81, and Oberon's in III. 2. 371. No doubt, the coincidence is intentional.

212. *man is but an ass.* The same unconscious humour in his choice of words as at III. 1. 119, 124. *go about*, endeavour.

215. *patched*, in a parti-coloured coat; see *patch* in G.

216. *offer*, attempt; almost = 'dare.'

217. *the eye...heard, the ear...seen.* A very common sort of humour; cf. again v. 194, 195. It seems to me most improbable that Shakespeare intended any reference to 1 *Corinthians* ii. 9.

225. *at her death*, i.e. Thisbe's. Theobald suggested "*after* death": Bottom, after dying as Pyramus, was to come to life again and sing the ballad. No doubt, it was not written; else Bottom would have proposed it instead of the Epilogue or "Bergomask dance," v. 360.

Scene 2.

4. *transported;* either 'carried off' by the fairies, who were popularly credited with this power (see *Appendix*, p. 152), or 'removed,' i.e. to the next world—a euphemism for 'killed.' Cf. *Measure for Measure*, IV. 3. 71—73:

> "A creature unprepared, unmeet for *death;*
> And to *transport* him in the mind he is
> Were damnable."

For the sense 'transformed' there seems to be no parallel.

6. *it goes not forward*, it cannot take place.

8. *discharge*, perform; as in I. 2. 95.

9. *the best wit of any...man.* This combines (1) 'the best wit of all men,' (2) 'a better wit than any man.' See v. 250.

13. *paragon*, model, pattern. It is amusing that Quince, the 'manager' of the company, who at the rehearsal in Act III. was very sharp with the others when they blundered, should now be himself corrected—by Flute too whom he reprimanded so (III. 1. 102.)

14. *a thing of naught*, a worthless thing; see *naught* in G.

18. *made men*, i.e. our fortunes had been made; cf. I. 2. 39.

19, 20. Probably an allusion to the case of some actor who had received a pension from Queen Elizabeth. Steevens notes that Thomas Preston, author of *Cambyses*, acted before Elizabeth at Cambridge in 1564, "and the Queen was so well pleased, that she bestowed on him a pension of twenty pounds a year, which is little more than a

shilling a day." In view of the probable allusion to his *Cambyses* in I. 2. 11—13 the reference here might well be to him. I find a somewhat similar passage in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Christmas*, performed before James I. in 1616, where a boy is supposed to act for the first time before the court and his mother asks the Master of the Revels, "How does his majesty like him, I pray? Will he *give eight pence a day*, think you?" Perhaps such passages were meant as a hint to the monarch to patronise the stage more liberally.

24. *in Pyramus*, in the character of Pyramus.

Enter Bottom. When he left the wood and returned to Athens, his head full of thoughts of the play (IV. 1. 223—225), Bottom must have gone, not to his own home (cf. l. 1) but to the palace, to learn what had been decided with regard to the play. From the palace he has hurried straight to Quince's house, expecting to find the "company" assembled there. Hence he has later information than his friends. He knows that the duke "hath dined" (35)—though not long since, for see what Snug said, "the duke is coming" etc.: also that their piece is "preferred" (39). Would any one of the others have been so quick to perceive, so prompt to do, just the right thing? or so resolute in deferring all questions about his adventures till afterwards? Probably not; but Bottom has "the best wit" etc.

26. *these hearts*, these good fellows; *heart*, especially with 'good' or 'dear,' is a friendly form of addressing persons. Cf. *Tempest*, I. 1. 29, "Cheerly, good hearts!" and I. 2. 305, "Awake, dear heart!"

27. *courageous;* cf. the colloquial use of *brave* = 'fine.'

29. *I am to*, i.e. I have wonders to tell—but not now.

36. *strings*, with which to fasten on their false beards.

37. *pumps*, light shoes (commonly for dancing); "so called because used for *pomp* or ornament" (Skeat). The *ribbons* with which they were adorned were often formed into the shape of flowers. Cf. *Romeo*, II. 4. 64, "my pump well flowered." The masquers in Browne's *Inner Temple Masque* (1614) wore "green pumps and roses done on with silver leaves."

39. *the short and the long is* = 'to put the matter shortly.' We say (colloquially) "the long and short of it is."

preferr'd, presented for approval. Philostrate has placed it on the list to be submitted to Theseus (V. 42, 43, 61—70.)

44. *breath;* there is a quibble on its ordinary sense and on the meaning 'words' (cf. III. 2. 44). Note also the quibble on "sweet"—"*sweet* breath," "*sweet* comedy."

ACT V.

Two elements of the plot have been disposed of in Act IV., viz. the dispute between Oberon and Titania, and the troubles of the lovers. The several marriages too have taken place, and Bottom has been freed from his predicament. Hence there is nothing to stand in the way of the 'interlude'—practically the only remaining element of the plot.

A very happy and artistic feature of this Act is the introduction of the fairies at the close. The play might easily have been made to end after the performance of the 'interlude,' i.e. about l. 377. But Shakespeare introduces Oberon and Titania, and brings them into marked connection with the marriage of Theseus and the other marriages, so as to link Act V. with Acts II.—IV. (in which the fairies played so conspicuous a part). This connection was indicated at the first appearance of the fairy King and Queen, II. I. 68—76; it was made clearer in IV. I. 93—97; and now it is brought into prominence, to show that the fairy interest of the play is closely allied to the human interest—i.e. that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* has 'unity' of interest, if not of action.

2. *may*, can; the original sense; cf. Germ. *mag*.

3. *antique*, odd; see G. *fairy toys*, fanciful ideas, idle tales.

4. *seething*, heated, excited.

5. *shaping fantasies*, imaginations quick to body forth; cf. 14, 15.

5, 6. *apprehend* = imagine, conceive. *comprehend* = understand.

8. *all compact*, entirely composed of.

10, 11. He is "frantic" because he sees in the face of a *dark-complexioned* woman (cf. III. 2. 257, note) beauty worthy of Helen of Troy. Helen, one of the most conspicuous figures of mediæval (as of classical) literature, is constantly taken as a type of perfect beauty. Thus the heroine of Greene's *Friar Bacon* says of herself, "I am Helen in my matchless hue" (X. 94).

brow of Egypt, the brow (i.e. face) of a *gypsy*, which is a corruption of *Egyptian*, due to the false notion that gypsies came from Egypt.

16. *airy nothing*, what is unsubstantial, non-existent.

18. *tricks*, arts, dexterous contrivances.

21. i.e. when one imagines some object or cause of fear.

23—27. 'The account of their experiences and the fact that the feelings of them all have been so changed prove that what they say cannot be due to mere imagination. The story, however strange, has consistency ("constancy").' *witnesseth*, bears testimony to, attests.

27. *admirable*, to be wondered at; see G.

32. *masques*. See G.

34. *after-supper;* cf. *Richard III.* IV. 3. 31, "Come to me...at *after-supper*. Probably the *rear-supper* or *banquet* (as it was variously called) is meant. It was a course of sweetmeats, fruit and wine, served after the principal supper, generally in another room, i.e. a 'dessert.' Some, however, take after *after-supper*=the interval between supper and bed-time.

35, 36. Shakespeare is thinking of the Master of the Revels, an important official at the English court in the 16th and 17th centuries.

38. *Philostrate;* the Folios *Egeus;* clearly an error—cf. I. 1. 11. Probably the two characters were played by the same actor.

39. *abridgement*, something to abridge, while away the time.

42. *brief*, list; see G. *ripe*, ready; so the 1st Quarto; the 2nd Quarto and Folios *rife*=prevalent, in fashion.

44—60. According to the Quartos, these lines are spoken entirely by Theseus. According to the Folios, the extracts from the list of plays are read out by Lysander (i.e. the couplets printed as quotations); and only the comments on each extract are spoken by Theseus.

44. *the Centaurs;* according to Greek mythology, a race living in Thessaly, who were half-horses, half-men. Line 47 implies that the "battle" here referred to is not their famous contest with the Lapithæ, but an incident in the life of Hercules, who, while in pursuit of the Erymanthian boar, was attacked by the Centaurs, but repulsed them.

47. *my kinsman*. A detail probably due to the *Life of Theseus* in North's *Plutarch*—"they [Theseus and Hercules] were near kinsmen, being cousins removed by the mother's side." So in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, I. 1. 66, Theseus refers to Hercules as "our kinsman."

48, 49. *the Thracian singer*, Orpheus; said to have lived in a cave in Thrace. "His grief for the loss of Eurydice [his wife] led him to treat with contempt the Thracian women, who in revenge tore him to pieces under the excitement of their Bacchanalian orgies" (*Classical Dict.*). Cf. *Paradise Lost*, VII. 34, "that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard."

Ovid tells the story fully, *Metamorphoses* XI. 1—55, and Shakespeare probably read it in Golding's version. (See *Introduction*, p. xxi.)

50. *an old device*. There may have been some Elizabethan play or masque on this subject. *device*, performance; see G.

52, 53. On the allusions traced here see *Introduction*, p. xiii.

54. *critical*, censorious, carping.

55. *not sorting with*, not in accordance with; cf. *Henry V.* IV. 1. 63, "It sorts well with your fierceness," i.e. agrees with.

56, 57. Cf. the similar ridicule in I. 2. 11—13 of the affected titles given by some Elizabethan writers to their plays and poems.

59. *strange snow.* We might have expected some epithet in contrast with "snow," as "hot" is in contrast with "ice"—e.g. "*swarthy* snow" (Staunton's emendation). Then we should have a pair of similar, strongly antithetic, phrases; and the fanciful notion "swarthy snow" would answer to the fanciful notion "tedious and brief" (for "tedious" is not naturally applied to brevity), just as "hot ice" does answer to "merry and tragical." Still, though the gain in symmetry might be an improvement, there is no absolute necessity for any change; moreover, the existing text is supported by the fact that Shakespeare twice uses the phrase "wondrous strange," viz. in 3 *Henry VI.* II. 1. 33, and *Hamlet*, I. 5. 164, "O day and night, but this is *wondrous strange!*" An ingenious proposal is—"and, wondrous strange! *jet* snow," i.e. black.

wondrous; scan as a trisyllable = *wónd-e-roùs.*

65. *fitted*, i.e. to his part = suited; cf. I. 2. 67.

68. When did Philostrate see the play? Not at the rehearsal (which was the first) in Act III., nor after the rehearsal, for who was there to take the part of Pyramus? It is clear (IV. 2. 1—24) that Quince and his friends never thought of playing the piece without Bottom. Perhaps the play was "preferred" (IV. 2. 39) *before* Philostrate saw it rehearsed (he may have been attracted by the title), and there was a final rehearsal, to which he here alludes, after the actors, in accordance with Bottom's instructions (IV. 2. 37), had met at the palace.

70. *passion*, emotion; see G.

74. *toil'd*, exerted. *unbreath'd*, unpractised, unexercised. Shakespeare uses *breathe* = to take exercise; cf. *Hamlet*, V. 2. 181.

75. *against*, in preparation for. *nuptial;* cf. I. 1. 125.

77. *not for you*, not fit for, worthy of, you.

80. *stretch'd*, strained, exaggerated. *conn'd*, learned; cf. I. 2. 102.

88, 89. *kind...kinder;* probably an intentional quibble.

90. i.e. "take in good part even their blundering attempt" (Rolfe).

91, 92. i.e. in accepting what "poor duty" offers, noble courtesy or consideration regards the ability of the performer, not the merit of the performance. Probably the text is corrupt; Coleridge proposed:

> "And what poor duty cannot do, *yet would*,
> Noble respect takes it," etc.

93. *clerks*, scholars. The lines (93—99) seem like an allusion to the royal visits to the Universities. Queen Elizabeth visited Cambridge in 1564 and Oxford in 1566.

95. *where*, on which occasions.

96. *periods*, full stops. Cf. Earle's *Characters*, 1628, 'A Sergeant.' —"He is the Period of young Gentlemen, or their full stop" (Arber's ed. p. 57). Cf. *period*='end,' e.g. in 1 *Henry VI.* IV. 2. 17, "The period of thy tyranny approacheth," i.e. the conclusion of.

101. *fearful*, full of fear, timid.

105. *to my capacity*, in my opinion. *to*, according to.

106. *Prologue*, the speaker of the prologue; cf. Cotgrave (1611), "Avant-joüeur: A Prologue, he that beginneth, or playeth before, the game, Enterlude or Commedie." *address'd*, ready; see G.

107. *Flourish*, a set of loud notes on the trumpet. It was customary to usher in the speaker of the Prologue thus, so that the audience might know that the play was about to begin and cease from conversation.

108—117. The main point of these lines is that the speaker exactly reverses by mispunctuation the sense of what he wishes to say. The student should re-punctuate the passage correctly. In the comedy *Roister Doister* (1551 *circa*) a lover's letter is similarly perverted, so that he is made to tell his "sweet Mistress" that he does not care for her at all, only regards her money, and is sorry to hear of her welfare.

113. *minding*, intending.

118. *stand upon points*, mind his stops (cf. F. *point*); but there is a quibbling allusion to the phrase 'stand upon points'=be over-scrupulous; cf. 3 *Henry VI.* IV. 7. 58, "wherefore stand you on nice points?" ='why are you so particular?'

123. *A recorder* (or *record*) was a kind of flute or flageolet with mouthpiece; cf. the title of a musical work published in 1686, "The Delightful Companion, or Choice New Lessons for the Recorder or Flute"; and *Paradise Lost*, I. 551, "flutes and soft recorders." It was so called, in allusion to its sweetness of sound, from the verb *record* ='to sing'; cf. Fletcher, *Pilgrims*, V. 4, "how the birds record!"

124. *not in government*, not under control; the player cannot regulate the instrument's 'stops' or holes (usually six) for the passage of air. Hamlet, holding a recorder, says, "*govern* these *ventages* [=stops] with your fingers and thumb" (III. 2. 372, 373).

128—152. It has been objected that the speaker who delivers these lines correctly cannot be the same as the speaker who made such nonsense of ll. 108—117. But Quince, very likely, heard what Theseus and

Lysander said as to his neglect of the "points," and is now more careful. Perhaps too he was a little nervous at the outset and spoke hurriedly; while the other characters enter he has time to collect himself. Also this passage is really an easier piece to learn and recite than the first part of the Prologue, being plain narrative.

130. Shakespeare has based this 'interlude' upon the story of 'Pyramus and Thisbe' in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, IV. 55—166, of which he had read Golding's translation (see *Introduction*, pp. xxi, xxii).

136, 137. Tradition varies as to 'The Man in the Moon.' "Some say it is the man who picked up a bundle of sticks on the Sabbath day (*Numbers* xv. 32—36). Dante [*Inferno* XX. 126, *Paradiso* II. 50] says it is Cain, and that the bush of thorns is an emblem of the curse pronounced on the earth: 'Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee' (*Gen.* iii. 18). Some say it is Endymion taken there by Diana" (Brewer, *Reader's Hand-Book*). Grimm mentions another view, that the man is "Isaac bearing a burthen of wood for the sacrifice of himself on mount Moriah." Grimm notes that the myth is an attempt to explain the 'spots' in the moon, i.e. the unevennesses on its surface.

A passage in Jonson's Masque *News from the New World* (1620) illustrates these lines: some one says that a messenger from the moon has arrived on earth, and this dialogue ensues:

"*Factor:* Where? Which is he? I must see his dog at his girdle, and the bush of thorns at his back, ere I believe it.

Herald: These are *stale ensigns* of the *stage's man in the moon.*"

139. Cf. Golding's translation of Ovid:

"They did agree *at Ninus Tombe to meet* without the towne,
And *tarry* underneath a tree that by the same did grow:
Which was a faire high *mulberie* with fruite as white as snow."

The line in Ovid (*Metam.* IV. 88) says *conveniant ad busta Nini.* The "towne" referred to is Babylon. *Ninus*, the supposed founder of Nineveh; husband of Semiramis, queen of Babylon.

140. *grisly*, grim, terrible. Either Quince (or the printer) is in error and the line ought to end "which by name Lion hight" (i.e. for the rhyme); or else a verse with the rhyme to *name* is lost.

Lion; in Ovid a lioness. *hight*, is called; evidently regarded by Shakespeare as an archaic, affected word. The "fantastical Spaniard" Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost*, I. 1. 258, uses it. See G.

143. *fall*, let fall; cf. *Lucrece*, 1551, "every tear he falls."

144. *bloody;* it had just killed some oxen (Ovid, *Met.* IV. 96, 97).

147—150. The ridicule here and later of excessive alliteration is, I

suppose, mainly directed against the Euphuists. Alliteration, not rhyme, was the basis of Anglo Saxon poetry: when rhyme came into vogue, alliteration was less used; but it had been revived in an exaggerated form by the Euphuists, and became one of the marked characteristics of the writers who, imitating Lyly, the author of *Euphues* (1578—1580), cultivated a strained, artificial diction and style. *Love's Labour's Lost* contains much satire of Euphuism and contemporary affectations; and one of these affectations ridiculed in the person of the pedant Holofernes (cf. IV. 2. 56) is the abuse of alliteration. The judicious use of this literary artifice may be illustrated from all Shakespeare's works. Mention instances in this play.

148. *broach'd*, stabbed, literally 'spitted'; F. *broche*, a spit. Or the metaphor might be 'tapped'—as in 'broaching a cask.'

149. *tarrying...mulberry*. From Golding; see 139, note.

164. *cranny*. Cf. Golding: "The wall that parted house from house had riven therein a *cranie*" (i.e. the houses of the respective parents of Pyramus and Thisbe).

sinister, left; Lat. *sinister*, on the left hand. Shakespeare always accents *sinister*, as in the Latin word (see I. 1. 151, note), not *sinister*, as now. Cf. *Henry V.* II. 4. 85, "'Tis no *sinister* nor no awkward claim."

171—4. Very similar is the nurse's lament, *Romeo*, IV. 5. 49—54.

171. *grim-look'd*, grim-looking. This use of the termination *-ed*=*-ing* or *-ful* occurs several times in Shakespeare; cf. "jeering and disdain*ed* contempt," i.e. disdain*ful*, 1 *Henry IV.* I. 3. 183. In Elizabethan English the use of the participial and adjectival terminations was not so defined and regular as now (cf. I. 1. 184, note).

183. *sensible*, capable of feeling (since the wall was Snout). Cf. *Comedy of Errors*, IV. 4. 27, "thou art sensible in nothing but blows."

188. *pat*, exactly; see G.

194, 195. *see a voice* etc.; cf. 360 and see IV. 1. 217, note.

198, 199. *Limander*, Leander, who swam across the Hellespont to visit *Hero* of Sestos (not *Helen*, as Thisbe says). He is often taken as a type of the devoted lover. For Elizabethans the story became famous through Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (1593).

200. *Shafalus*, Cephalus. *Procrus*, Procris. See III. 2. 389 note.

205. *'tide*, betide—'whether life or death befall me.'

208. *mural down*. The Quartos have *Moon used* (clearly a corruption of the text); the Folios *morall downe*, whence Pope conjectured *mural*=*mure*, 'wall.' An obvious suggestion is *mure all down*.

210, 211. i.e. a wall which heard what the two neighbours said, without warning them of its power, would soon be pulled down (when that power was discovered). For though "walls have ears," as the old proverb said, no one likes walls which use their ears and learn people's secrets.

213, 214. i.e. the best players or play-writers can give but a shadowy, faint representation of life, and the worst can do so much—if their deficiencies are 'amended' by the imagination of the audience. So in the Prologue to *Henry V.* Shakespeare says that what the play loses through inadequate performance the imagination must make good. See some further remarks, pp. 153, 154.

227. The Quartos and Folios have *A lion fell*, and the natural sense of the passage with that reading is—'Know that I, Snug the joiner, am a fierce lion.' But Snug wishes to say that he is *not* a lion. Therefore, to give the text the required negative sense, some explain that *nor* qualifies what precedes as well as what follows—in fact, that *neither* is simply omitted before *A lion fell*. There are cases where Shakespeare omits *neither*, but I cannot believe that this is one; the pause after *fell* seems fatal to this view. Some boldly print *No lion fell*. Others hyphen *lion* and *fell* and take *fell* = 'skin,' as in *Lear*, v. 3. 24; then Snug is made to say that he is only 'a lion's skin' (for of course he would be dressed up in one). A clever suggestion is *nam* (in 226), an archaic contracted form of *ne* + *am* = am not.

243. *horned;* apart from the reference to the horns of the moon (cf. 246), there may be a glance at the material of Moonshine's lanthorn; horn was generally used for lanthorns instead of glass.

246. *no crescent*, not a waxing moon, i.e. "in the wane" (258).

250. *the greatest error* etc. Two constructions are combined: (1) 'the greatest error of all', (2) 'a greater error than the rest.' Cf. IV. 2. 9, note. That this idiom, though illogical, is natural, is proved by the fact that it existed independently in Greek and in English. An extreme form of it is *Paradise Lost*, IV. 323, 324:

> "Adam, the goodliest man of men since born
> His sons, the fairest of her daughters, Eve."

There in the second line the constructions united are: (1) 'Eve, fairest of women,' (2) 'Eve, fairer than her daughters.' As the line stands it makes Eve one of her own daughters. Analyse the first verse —"Adam the goodliest etc."—in the same way.

253. *for the candle*, i.e. because of.

254. There is a quibble on the two words *snuff*. Besides its

obvious sense, *in snuff* means 'to be angry, offended.' Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 21, 22:

"*Ros.* We need more *light* to find your meaning out.

Kath. You'll mar the *light* by taking it [the meaning] *in snuff*"; i.e. by being vexed at it. In this phrase *snuff* is connected with *sniff* (a sign of annoyance) and distinct from *snuff*, the wick of a candle.

268. *Ninny's.* Thisbe forgets Quince's correction, III. 1. 100.

274. *moused.* The lion shakes and tears Thisbe's mantle as a cat does a mouse.

279. *gleams.* The Quartos and Folio 1 *beams*, repeated from 277; the other Folios *streams*. The alliteration makes *gleams* probable.

283. *dole*, grief; Lat. *dolor*. We still use *doleful*.

289—291. The three Fates—Gk. Μοῖραι, Lat. Parcæ—were Clotho, who held the distaff; Lachesis, who wove the web of each man's life; and Atropos, who cut the threads with her shears when the web was complete, i.e. the man's life ended. See again 343—348. If Pyramus means to identify the Fates with the Furies, cf. *Lycidas*, 75, "Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears," i.e. Atropos.

291. *thread*, the warp, i.e. the threads extended lengthwise in the loom. *thrum*, the tufted ends of these threads, i.e. where they are fastened to the frame (see G.) Hence figuratively to "cut thread and thrum"='to cut everything, good and bad.'

292. *quail*=*quell*, in origin and—here—in sense, i.e. 'to kill'; cf. the noun *quell*='murder,' *Macbeth*, I. 7. 72. A. S. *cwellan*='to kill.'

293. *passion*, violent sorrow; cf. 321 and see G.

299. *cheer*; probably 'face,' as in III. 2. 96; see G.

312. *die...ace.* There is a double play on words, Demetrius alluding to *dice*, of which *die* is the singular, and pronouncing *ace* (a single spot on a die)=*ass* (cf. 317). Cf. *Timon of Athens*, v. 4. 34, 35:

"by the hazard of the *spotted die*
Let *die* the spotted" (i.e. the wicked).

Demetrius seems to be fond of puns; cf. 253, 254.

317. *prove an ass.* There is a point, an 'irony,' in this remark that Theseus is not aware of: Bottom has already "proved an ass."

318. *How chance.* See I. 1. 129, note.

324. *mote*='the smallest thing imaginable, an atom.' Spelt *moth* in the Quartos and Folios, as often then; cf. Florio (1598), "Festucco ...a *moth*, a little beame" (i.e. of dust).

325—7. The Folios omit from *he for a man* down to *God bless us*; no doubt, because of the statute of James I. forbidding profanity on the

stage. The editors of the 1st Folio (1623) observed this statute either by omitting an objectionable passage or phrase, as here, or by making some slight change, e.g. *Heaven* or *Jove* for *God*. Cf. *Richard II.* I. 1. 187—Quartos, "O, *God* defend my soul;" Folios, "O, *Heaven* defend."

330. *moans*; so Theobald reads; the original texts have *means*, possibly=*menes* from an old word *menen*, to lament, cognate with *moan* (Ritson). *videlicet;* in lit. sense, 'you may see' (*videre licet*).

342. *eyes...green;* then considered a peculiar beauty. Thus in *Romeo*, III. 5. 222, the Nurse, praising Romeo's rival, Paris, says that an eagle "Hath not so *green*, so quick, so *fair* an eye," as Paris has. Cf. also *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, V. 1. 133, "thy rare green eye," where Skeat notes that "Dante [*Purgatorio*, XXXI. 116] uses the word *smeraldi* (emeralds) to denote the eyes of Beatrice."

343—348. Editors quote a similar passage, meant seriously, from a well-known play of that time—*Damon and Pythias*, by Richard Edwards—and some believe that Shakespeare intended these lines as a parody of it. What seems to me quite certain is, that the extravagant style of the speeches of Pyramus and Thisbe is meant by Shakespeare as a parody, not perhaps specially of any one play, but generally of a class of plays, such e.g. as Kyd's much-ridiculed *Spanish Tragedy* (1592).

343. *Sisters Three*, i.e. the Fates; see 289—291, note.

347. *shore*, used here instead of *shorn* for the sake of the rhyme.

351. *my breast imbrue*, shed the blood of my heart.

360. *a Bergomask dance*, a rustic sort of dance; see G.

362, 363. *no epilogue...no excuse.* In the Epilogue the author and the actors generally apologise for the defects of the piece or of its representation. Hence in the (prose) Epilogue to *As You Like It* Rosalind says, "a *good* play needs no epilogue." Shakespeare's avoidance of Epilogues is marked. There is one in rhyme to *The Tempest*, but its authorship has been suspected. Puck's apologetic speech at the end, 430—445, is really an Epilogue, though not marked as such.

374. *palpable-gross*, so gross (i.e. 'clumsily realistic,' 'crude') that everyone can feel, perceive, its crudeness. Lat. *palpare*=to feel.

375. Cf. *Henry V.* IV. *chorus*, 20, "tardy-gaited night," i.e. slow in passing. Contrast "hasty-footed time," III. 2. 200.

379. *behowls*, howls at; the original texts have *beholds*. The change seems certain; cf. *As You Like It*, V. 2. 119, "'tis like the howling of Irish wolves against the moon."

381. *fordone*, wearied; see G.

382. *wasted*, consumed; used of consuming time, II. 1. 57.

383—385. For the note of the owl regarded as an evil omen or portent of death, cf. *Lucrece*, 165, "No noise but owls' and wolves' death-boding cries." So in *Macbeth*, II. 2. 3.

387—389. See III. 2. 381, 382. *church-way*, leading to the church. It has been suggested that the word is a corruption of *church-hay*= 'church-yard,' where *hay*=middle E. *hawe*, a yard, from A. S. *haga*, an enclosure. *Church-hay* was used up to the 17th century.

391. *triple*, so called because ruling in three capacities—as Luna or Cynthia in heaven, Diana on earth, Proserpina in hell. Vergil, *Æn.* IV. 511, calls her *tergemina Hecate*, and Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VII. 177, speaks of Diana as *diva triformis*. Of course, the "team" drew the chariot in which she rode as Luna (goddess of the moon).

In poetry *Hecate* is often treated as only two syllables. Cf. *Comus*, 135, "Wherein thou ridest with Hecat', and befriend."

396, 397. Halliwell gives an old woodcut (date 1628), in which Robin Goodfellow or Puck is represented with a large broom. It was a traditional belief that these domestic fairies were very cleanly and encouraged cleanliness (see *Introduction*, p. xxx).

397. *To sweep...behind the door.* "A common practice" (says Farmer) "in large old houses, where the doors of halls and galleries are thrown backward, and seldom or never shut."

402. *this ditty.* Apparently, the song has been lost.

403. *it;* the pronoun does not refer to "ditty"; it is merely a cognate accusative referring with a certain emphasis to the action expressed by the verb. The idiom is common in Elizabethan writers, and we can generally tell from the sense of the verb what the object implied by *it* is. Cf. "revel it," where *it*='revelry,' 3 *Henry VI.* III. 3. 225; "fight it out," where *it*='the fight,' 1 *Henry VI.* I. 1. 99; "foot it," where (as here) *it*='the dance,' *Tempest*, I. 2. 380. Abbott notes that *it* is often added thus to "nouns or words that are not generally used as verbs, in order to give them the force of verbs"; cf. "duke it," *Measure for Measure*, III. 2. 100, "queen it," *Henry VIII.* II. 3. 37.

404. *rehearse...by rote*, repeat from memory. *rote*, see G.

According to Johnson, this song was not the same as the "ditty" of 402; i.e. there were two songs (both lost), the first sung by the fairies attendant on Oberon, the second by the fairies of Titania's train. Probably the MS. of the songs was kept separate from the rest of the play, and was given to the musician who had to set them to music. In this way may the loss have occurred.

410, 411. Shakespeare may allude to an ancient custom that

formed part of English marriage-ceremonies, viz. the solemn blessing of the bridal-bed. The old collection of Church-ritual entitled the 'Sarum Use' contains a form of prayer and benediction for such occasions.

"*A Midsummer-Night's Dream* makes the impression of having been written in honour of the marriage of some great noble, in which case the bridal blessings with which it closes were doubtless intended to have more than a merely dramatic [i.e. to have a personal] significance" (Boas).

412. The only "issue" of Theseus and Hippolyta known to mythology was Hippolytus, who was far from "fortunate."

create=created. A noticeable point in Elizabethan English is the tendency to make the past participles of verbs of Latin origin conform with the Latin forms. This is the case especially with verbs of which the Latin originals belong to the 1st and 3rd conjugations. Thus Shakespeare and Milton have many participles like 'create,' 'consecrate' (422), 'incorporate' (III. 2. 208), 'dedicate,' where the termination *ate*, in modern English *-ated*, = Lat. *-atus*, the passive participial termination of the 1st conjugation; cf. *creatus*, *consecratus*.

416—421. The notion of fairies presenting a child at "nativity" (=birth) with good or evil gifts and personal qualities, e.g. beauty or ugliness and the like, occurs in many fairy-tales. Thus in the romance *Huon of Bordeaux*, which introduced Oberon into English fairy-lore, Oberon himself is represented as having received at his birth all sorts of good qualities and possessions from the fairies; but there was a single malicious fairy present, who said that he should never be more than three feet in height, and, according to the romance, he never was.

416—419. Cf. *King John*, III. 1. 45—47.

> "Full of unpleasing *blots* and sightless stains,
> Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, *prodigious*,
> Patch'd with foul *moles* and eye-offending *marks*."

418. *hare-lip*, a kind of cleft or fissure in the upper lip. In *Lear*, III. 4. 120—124, "the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet," a malicious spirit, is said to cause many disfigurements and blemishes, and among them is "the hare-lip."

419. *prodigious*, portentous, unnatural.

423. *take his gait*, take his way.

424. *several;* here='separate' in sense, as in origin (Lat. *separare*).

426, 427. In the original texts these lines are transposed.

430—445. An Epilogue, as we have noted (362, 363, note); it is in the same metre as the Epilogue in *The Tempest*.

430. *shadows*, spirits; cf. III. 2. 347. But there is, I think, also a hint at the sense that *shadow* bears in 213. Puck seems to echo what Theseus said, viz. that the stage, after all, only offers unsubstantial images. Such a reminder has an obvious appropriateness at the close of a play which is more than commonly fanciful.

435. i.e. yielding in return for our labour no more than a dream: out of so fanciful a subject only a 'dream' can be made.

dream; a pointed allusion to the play's title; see *Introduction*, pp. xvii, xviii.

but=than; so used after a negative with comparative; cf. I. 2. 83, "no more discretion but to hang us."

438, 442. Note "*an* honest Puck" and "*the* Puck." The use of the articles reminds us that *Puck* was originally a general term for any fairy, not the proper name of a particular fairy. See *Introduction*, p. xxix.

439, 440. i.e. if we have the luck, though we do not deserve it, to escape being hissed.

440. *scape*. Shakespeare and Milton use *scape*, short for *escape*, more often than *escape*. From O. F. *escaper*, modern F. *échapper*, which meant literally 'to slip out of one's cape,' from Lat. *ex*, out of + *cappa*, a cape.

serpent's tongue; the idea of an audience hissing a piece is similarly expressed in *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 1. 145, 146.

441. *ere long*. Perhaps Shakespeare had another play ready. So at the end of 2 *Henry IV.* he promises another piece with Falstaff in it.

444. i.e. give me your plaudits. Cf. the Epilogue to *All's Well That Ends Well*, "Your gentle *hands* lend us," i.e. clap us. The Latin comedies of Plautus and Terence end with the appeal to the audience *Plaudite* ('clap') or an equivalent.

"This play is so purely delicious, so little intermixed with the painful passions from which poetry distils her sterner sweets, so fragrant with hilarity, so bland and yet so bold, that I cannot imagine Shakespeare's mind to have been in any other frame than that of healthful ecstasy when the sparks of inspiration thrilled through his brain in composing it...And all the time he must have been self-assured that his genius was 'to put a girdle round the earth'; and that souls, not yet in being, were to enjoy the revelry of his fancy" (Campbell).

GLOSSARY.

THE *Glossary* illustrates some general principles of language which deserve careful notice.

(1) Words tend to deteriorate in meaning. Shakespeare sometimes uses in a good sense a word which in modern English has a bad sense. The converse is rare: words seldom rise in sense. Deterioration of meaning is exemplified by *gossip*, *livery*, *pert*, *quaint:* improvement of meaning by *shrewd* and *companion*, which has lost its contemptuous tone (see I. 1. 15, note). Generally a change of sense, for the better or the worse, can be explained by some external cause, such as the confusion of one word with another—cf. *pert;* or by something inherent in the word's original sense and its associations—cf. *gossip:* the process by which *gossip* deteriorated is easily traced.

(2) Words similar in sound and sense tend to get confused; and confusion, helped by the loss of inflections in English, often affects the form and sense of one or both words. Cf. *abide=aby*. Where one of the two words is constantly used, the other rarely, the more familiar is likely to absorb the other altogether. Cf. perhaps *latch*. A remarkable instance is *allay*, which as used by Elizabethans really comprised three distinct verbs, viz. *allay*, 'to lay down'=A. S. *álecgan;* *allay*, 'to alleviate'=Lat. *alleuiare;* and *allay* (now spelt *alloy*), 'to mix'=Lat. *alligare*. All three were combined in an inextricable tangle. "Confluence of forms" is Professor Skeat's term for this process.

(3) English has a number of what the philologist calls "doublets": that is, "words which, though apparently differing in form, are nevertheless, from an etymological point of view, one and the same, or only differ in some unimportant suffix" (Skeat). Usually the cause of this is that the same word has been introduced into English twice, through different channels. Thus a word may be taken directly from the Latin: then its English form will probably be closely similar to its Latin form.

But it may also come into our language indirectly through the French: then the English form will show the modifying influence of the French and be less similar to the Latin. See *vaward*; see also *cavalero* and *apricock*, where we note how a form borrowed from the familiar language French gradually ousts a parallel form borrowed from a less familiar language like Spanish or Portuguese.

(4) Careless pronunciation plays a considerable part in determining the forms of words. People begin by speaking a word wrongly: the wrong form becomes familiar to them, and they end by writing it; and so it gains a footing in the language. *An* (='if'), *ousel* (in the form in which the original texts of the play print the word), and *newt*, all illustrate different aspects of careless pronunciation.

The following abbreviations should be observed:—

A. S. = Anglo-Saxon, i.e. English down to about the Conquest.

Middle E. = Middle English, i.e. English from about the Conquest to about 1500.

Elizabethan E. = the English of Shakespeare and his contemporaries (down to about 1650).

O. F. = Old French, i.e. French till about 1600.

F. = modern French.

Germ. = modern German.

Gk = Greek.

Ital. = modern Italian.

Lat. = Latin.

The dates, of course, are only approximate: such divisions must be more or less arbitrary and open to criticism.

Note: In using the Glossary the student should pay very careful attention to the context in which each word occurs.

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aby, III. 2. 175, 335 = Middle E. *abyen* or *abye*, 'to pay for,' from A.S. intensive prefix *á* + *bycgan*, 'to *buy*.' Hence figuratively to *aby* an offence is 'to pay for it,' i.e. redeem, expiate it. In both lines the Folios have *abide*, which was used = *aby*; cf. *Julius Caesar*, III. 2. 119, "some will dear abide it," i.e. suffer for it. This use of *abide* ('to await') was due to confusion with *aby*, through similarity of sound and sense (to *await* the consequences of a deed being akin to paying for it).

adamant, II. 1. 195; from Gk ἀδάμας, 'invincible'—ἀ-, negative prefix + δαμάειν, 'to tame.' Properly *adamant* meant 'a hard stone,' especially the *diamond* (a corruption of *adamant* through O. F. *diamant*); then also the lode-stone or magnet. Cf. *Batman* (1584), "the stone *Magnas*, an Adamant,...Yron [i.e. iron] is drawne to that stone" (128), and again, "the stone *Adamas* draweth after him yron" (133).

address'd, v. 106, 'ready'; cf. *Julius Caesar*, III. 1. 29, "he is address'd; press near." Literally *address*='to make straight,' from O. F. *adressier*, Late Lat. *addrictiare*, from Lat. *directus*, 'straight.'

admirable, v. 27. Milton uses *admire*=Lat. *admirari*, 'to wonder'; cf. *Paradise Lost*, II. 677, 678:

> "The undaunted fiend what this might be admired,
> Admired, not feared."

Cf. the noun in *Revelation* xvii. 6, "I wondered with great admiration," i.e. astonishment.

an. Note that—(1) *an* is a weakened form of *and* (*d* often drops off from the end of a word: cf. *lawn*=*laund*); (2) *and*='if' was a regular use till about 1600. Cf. Bacon, *Essays* (23), "they will set an house on fire, *and* it were but to roast their egges"; *Matthew* xxiv. 48, "But *and if* that evil servant shall say." The 1st Folio (1623) often has *and* where modern texts print *an*; e.g. in I. 2. 86, "*an* 'twere."

The phrase *and if* or *an if* (III. 2. 78) really='if if,' since *and* or *an* by itself expresses the condition: *if* was added to strengthen it. How *and* or *an* came to have the meaning 'if' is doubtful. Skeat says it was because the Scandinavian *ende*, 'moreover,' which is cognate with *and*, was also used='if,' i.e. that the English idiom was an imitation of the Scandinavian; but this view is disputed.

Antipodes, III. 2, 55; Gk. ἀντίποδες, literally 'men with feet opposite to ours,' from ἀντίπους=Gk. ἀντί, 'opposite to'+πούς, 'a foot.' Hence 'those who are on the opposite side of the globe to ourselves.' Compare *Richard II.* III. 2. 49, "Whilst we were wandering *with the Antipodes*," a phrase=at the other end of the world.

antique, v. 3. Etymologically *antique*, 'old'=*antic*, 'odd,' and in Elizabethan E. the two spellings were interchanged. Hence the meaning intended by Shakespeare is not always certain. In this line the 1st Quarto has *antique* (retained in most texts); the 2nd Quarto and 1st Folio *anticke*. Seemingly the sense here is 'strange, odd'; and one is tempted to print *antic*. Shakespeare always accents *ántique* (in modern E. *antíque*) and *ántic*.

apricock, III. 1. 169; this form (still used in the 18th century) and

abrecock were the oldest, taken direct from Portuguese *albricoque;* the modern *apricot* is from F. *abricot.* Original word Lat. *præcoqua*, 'the early ripe fruit,' which passed (1) into Late Gk as πραικοκία, (2) thence into Arabic as *al barqúq* (where *al*='the'), (3) thence into Portuguese.

argument, III. 2. 242, 'subject, theme'; the literal sense of Lat. *argumentum.* Milton at the beginning of *Paradise Lost* calls his subject "this great argument" (I. 24). Here the context shows that 'subject of merriment' is meant; cf. *Much Ado*, I. 1. 258, "thou wilt prove a notable argument," i.e. be turned into ridicule.

Ay me, I. 1. 132; often in Shakespeare. Cotgrave (1611) has, "Oh; aye me; an interjection expressing sense of paine, or of smart." It is the O. F. *aymi*, 'alas for me!'; cf. Gk οἴμοι.

bay, IV. 1. 118; short for *abay*=O. F. *abaier*, from Lat. *ad*, 'at' + *baubari*, 'to yelp.' Cf. Turbervile, *Art of Venerie*, "when [hounds] have...brought a Deare, Bore, or such lyke to turn, head agaynst them, then we say *They Baye.*" So to be *at bay* literally='to be at the baying or barking of the dogs'—F. *être aux abois*, from *aboi*, 'barking.' Shakespeare uses many sporting terms.

Bergomask, V. 360, 368=Ital. *bergamasco*, "adj. to *Bergamo*, a town in the Venetian territory, capital of the old province of Bergamasco, whose inhabitants used to be ridiculed as clownish" (*Stanford Dict.*). Hence *Bergomask* (correctly, *Bergamask*)='of or belonging to *either* the town Bergamo *or* the province Bergamasco'; and a "Bergomask dance" was a rude, clownish dance such as the people of those parts practised. Examples of "Bergomask" tunes to accompany the dance exist in old Italian *suites de pièces* (i.e. dance-tunes of different countries strung together). It is said that Mendelssohn's setting of the "Bergomask dance" in his incidental music to this play is quite unlike the traditional dance-measure of the province as still kept up. (Shakespeare mentions the town *Bergamo* as *Bergoma* in *The Taming of the Shrew*, V. 1. 81. Tasso and Donizetti were born there.)

beteem, I. 1. 131 = *be*, an intensive prefix + *teem*, an obsolete verb= 'to think fit'—cognate with Dutch *tamen*, 'to be seemly,' Germ. *ziemen*, 'to be fit.' We find *beteem* in three main, closely allied, senses: (1) 'to think fit or proper'; cf. Milton, *Animadversions*, XIII., "although he could have well beteemed to have thanked him": (2) 'to give, grant'—as here; cf. Spenser, *Faerie Queene* II. 8. 19, "So would I...Beteeme to you this sword": (3) 'to allow, permit'; cf. *Hamlet*, I. 2. 141.

bottle, IV. 1. 37, 'a bundle of hay'; O. F. *botel*, 'a small bundle,' diminutive of *botte*, 'a bundle.' Commonly said to=a truss of hay, but

Skeat shows that it was less (*Two Noble Kinsmen*, pp. 147, 148). Perhaps it was as much as a man could carry in his arms; cf. Florio (1598), "Muzzo...a bundle, a sheefe, a bottle or wad of straw," and "Manipolo, a handfull, a bottle of haie...a bundle." Bottom would scarce require a whole truss. The word, once quite common, survives in the proverb, "to look for a needle in a bottle of hay." A pack-horse was sometimes called a '*bottle*-horse,' i.e. one that carried bundles, etc.

bottom; as a weavers' term it signifies (1) 'a clew on which to wind thread' (i.e. that which is the bottom or base of a ball of thread); cf. Cotgrave (1611), "Foudrillon: A bottom to wind silke, thread or yarne on." Then (2) 'the skein or ball of thread when wound'; cf. *The Taming of the Shrew*, IV. 3. 138, "sew me in the skirts of it, and beat me to death with a bottom of brown thread."

brief, V. 42, 'list'; cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, V. 2. 138, "This is the brief of money, plate, and jewels, I am possess'd of." F. *bref*= Lat. *breve*, neuter of *brevis*, 'short'—in Legal Lat. = 'a document, short catalogue, summary.' Rare now except in the phrase 'barrister's brief.' The same word as Germ. *brief*, 'a letter.'

bully, III. 1. 8, IV. 2. 19; used originally as a term of endearment among lovers, then of admiration = 'good friend,' 'fine fellow,' 'gallant' —especially in addressing a person colloquially; cf. *Merry Wives*, II. 3. 18, "Bless thee, bully Doctor." Perhaps from Dutch *boel*, 'lover'; cf. Germ. *buhle*, 'lover.'

carol, II. 1. 102. From O.F. *carole* = Ital. *caróla*, 'a dance, song' = Low Lat. *carola*, 'a chain or circlet, e.g. of pearls,' also 'a dance'; *carola* is corrupted from Lat. *corolla*, 'a wreath.' Apparently the connection of sense is (1) a wreath or circlet, (2) by metaphor, a dance in a circle, (3) a song accompanying the dance, (4) any song, but especially a Christmas song. The only difficulty is the step from (1) to (2); show how the metaphor is worked in.

Cavalery, IV. 1. 25, 'gallant, man of fashion'; here used as a sort of title, as its cognate *Chevalier* is still used. The word was adopted from Spanish as *cavallero* or *cavaliero*. Cf. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, II. 3. 77, "Cavaleiro Slender"; and 2 *Henry IV.* V. 3. 62, 63, "I'll drink to Master Bardolph, and to all the cavaleros about London." Bottom naturally blunders over what was still almost a foreign word. From Late Lat. *caballicare*, to ride a *caballus* ('horse'). For *b* softening into *v* cf. *revel* from Lat. *rebellare* (see *night-rule*, p. 139).

cheer. Properly (1) 'countenance,' as in III. 2. 96; Late Lat.

cara, 'face,'=Gk *κάρα*, 'head.' Then (2) 'spirits.' especially high spirits, because the face reflects the feelings. So 'to be of good cheer' means literally 'to be of a happy countenance,' i.e. to be in good spirits, cheerful.

churl, II. 2. 78, 'a boorish fellow'; A. S. *ceorl*, 'a countryman, peasant.' Hence *churlish*.

coil, III. 2. 339, 'confusion, trouble'; a Celtic word; cf. Irish *goil*, 'to rage.' "Here's such a coil!" *Romeo*, II. 5. 67.

craze, I. 1. 92, 'to damage, impair'; cf. Cotgrave (1611), "*Accrazer:* To break, burst, *craze*, bruise." From Swedish *krasa*, 'to break in pieces,' F. *écraser* coming from the same source. Cf. *Lear*, III. 4. 175, "grief hath crazed my wits." Hence *crazy*='weakminded.' Cognates: *crash*, *crack*, *creak*.

cry, IV. 1. 129, 'pack of hounds'; so called from the hounds' *cry* or notes. Cf. *Coriolanus*, III. 3. 120, "You common cry of curs."

cue, III. 1. 78, V. 186; some derive from F. *queue*, Lat. *cauda*, 'a tail' (whence E. *queue*, a tail or twist of hair), because an actor's *cue* was the *tail*-end of the last speech. But F. *queue* was not used so, the F. term being *réplique*. Wedgwood takes *cue*=*Q*, the first letter of Lat. *quando*, 'when'; he says that in the MS. copy given out to an actor of the part of a play which he had to learn *Q* was marked at the points when it was his turn to speak. But it is not certain that this was done. The word therefore remains doubtful.

curst, III. 2. 300, 341, 439=*cursed*, the p. p. of *curse;* through colloquial use *curst* lost something of its original force and in Shakespeare commonly means 'shrewish' (especially used so of women), 'ill-tempered, crabbed.' In *The Taming of the Shrew* the heroine is called "Katharine the curst" (I. 2. 128), "Kate the curst" (II. 187).

darkling, II. 2. 86, 'in the dark'; cf. *Lear*, I. 4. 237, "So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling." It is a substantival *adverb*, in which *-ling* or *-long* is a relic of a dative case-ending; cf. *headlong*, *sidelong*=Middle E. *hedling*, *sideling*. In Scotch the form is *-lins;* cf. *hafflins*='half,' e.g. in Burns, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, 62, "While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak."

device, V. 50; used here (and perhaps in I. 2. 107) of a dramatic performance; cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. 2. 669. So in Jonson's *Time Vindicated*, "what is that the Time will now exhibit?...what devices, what new sports?" Spenser (*Faerie Queene*, V. 3. 3) uses *devicefull*='full of masques, representations.'

dowager, I. 1. 5, 157, one who has a *dowage; dow-age* comes from F.

douer, 'to en*dow*' (Lat. *dotare*) + the termination *-age* = Lat. *-aticum*. Cf. *voyage* = *viaticum*, *carnage* = Low Lat. *carnaticum*.

Ethiop, III. 2. 257, literally "a native of or pertaining to Ethiopia, the name anciently given to a large and indefinite tract lying south of *Egypt*; hence a negro" (*Stanford Dict.*). Dark complexions being unpopular in Shakespeare's time (cf. "brow of *Egypt*", v. 11), 'Ethiop' was constantly applied to dark people, especially women, as a term of contempt. In *Much Ado*, v. 4. 38, Claudio would marry Hero, "were she an Ethiop," i.e. even if she were.

eyne, I. 1. 242, v. 178; an old form of the plural of *eye* (A.S. *éage*, plur. *éagan*) where *-ne* = the plural termination which we get in *oxen*, *brethren*, *children*. Chaucer has *eyen*; cf. *The Prologue*, 152, "hir eyen greye as glas." Elizabethan poets use *eyne* (or *eyn*) almost entirely for the sake of rhyme; cf. Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, I. 4. 21, where the rhyme *swyne...eyne...fyne* runs throughout. Shakespeare has *eyne* thirteen times—only twice unrhymed.

fairy; originally a collective noun = 'fairy folk, fairy land, enchantment'; cf. the title of *The Faerie Queene*. Late Lat. *fata*, 'a fairy,' formed from the plural of *fatum*, 'fate.'

favour, I. 1. 186 = 'face'—the expression of the face indicating the feeling of favour or grace. Cf. *well-favoured* = 'handsome, comely'; "Rachel was beautiful and well favoured," *Genesis* xxix. 17.

fond, II. 2. 88, 'foolish,' its old sense; cf. *King Lear*, IV. 7. 60, "a foolish fond old man." Originally *fond* was the p. p. of a Middle E. verb *fonnen*, 'to act like a fool.' The root is Scandinavian.

fordone, v. 381, 'tired out,' 'done up' (in colloquial E.); *for-* is here an intensive prefix, as often. Cf. *forlorn*, 'utterly lost.' The ordinary sense of *fordo* in Middle E. is 'to destroy.'

gleek, III. 1. 150, 'to jest, scoff'; probably akin to A. S. *gelác*, 'play,' *geláccan*, 'to trick'—from prefix *ge-* + *lác* = *lark* in modern E., 'game, fun.' Cf. Scotch *glaik*, 'a deception, trick.'

goblin, III. 2. 399; generally a malicious elf or fairy that plays tricks, like Puck. O. F. *gobelin*, Low Lat. *gobelinus*, a diminutive of Low Lat. *cobalus*, 'a sprite, demon' = Gk κόβαλος, 'rogue.'

gossip, II. 1. 47; originally = 'a sponsor at baptism'—from *God* + *sib*, 'related,' i.e. one related to the baptised child in respect of God. Later, as christenings were followed by social gatherings and led to talk, *gossip* got the notion 'a talkative person' (especially woman). An instance of the deterioration of meaning.

grain, I. 2. 97, 'dye,' strictly 'scarlet dye.' From O. F. *graine*,

Lat. *granum*, the Low Lat. word = the classical Lat. *coccum*, which signified the scarlet dye made from the cochineal insect found on the scarlet oak in Spain and other Mediterranean countries. Cf. Cotgrave (1611), "*Graine:* the seed of herbs, also grain wherewith cloth is dyed, *scarlet dye*." So in North's *Plutarch*, "this sail...was not white but red, *dyed in grain*, and of the colour of *scarlet*" (*Life of Theseus*). Probably this cochineal insect (*coccum*) got to be called *granum* simply because it looked like a grain or seed and was thought to be one.

harbinger, III. 2. 380, 'forerunner.' Cf. Florio (1598), "Foriere, a harbinger for a camp or a prince," and Bullokar (1616), "Harbinger, one that taketh vp lodging for others," i.e. the *harbinger* was the officer who went on ahead to procure the night's shelter (*harbourage*) for his master. In Middle E. *harbinger* was spelt *herbergeour;* cf. *Canterbury Tales*, 5417, "herbergeours that wenten him before." Ultimately from Icelandic *herbergi*, 'army-shelter'; cf. Germ. *heer*, 'army' + *bergen*, 'to shelter.'

henchman, II. 1. 121, 'page'; "Henchman, *paige d'honneur*, *enfant d'honneur*" (Palsgrave, 1530). Skeat derives from *hengst-man*, 'horseman, groom' (A. S. *hengest* = 'horse'), and compares similar cognate compounds in the Scandinavian languages. The *hengest* might easily be softened to *hench*. Probably the *henchmen* were in the first instance young nobles who attended on the king (Henry VI. had three, Edward IV. six) as mounted pages, e.g. at state-ceremonies. In the Ordinances of the Royal Household they were assigned "to the riding household"; they are often mentioned in connection with tournaments; and entries in the Court Ward-Robe Accounts show that riding-equipments were part of the 'livery' served out to them: all points that confirm the derivation from *hengest*. In connection with the Court they are not, it seems, mentioned later than the time of Henry VIII.; and gradually *henchman* (or *hench-boy*—used by Ben Jonson) came to mean any kind of page—as here. (Skeat.)

heresy, II. 2. 139; Gk. αἵρεσις, 'a choice, choosing'—in the ecclesiastical sense 'a false doctrine,' from the idea 'a choosing of opinions other than those established and accepted.'

hight, V. 140, 'is called'; used by Spenser and others as (1) a present tense, (2) a preterite, (3) a participle (='called'). It is a late form of A. S. *hátte*, the preterite and participle of *hátan*, 'to call or be called.' Cf. Gothic *haitada*, 'I am called,' and Germ. *ich heisse*. Noticeable as the only verb in E. with a *passive* sense.

his; the regular *neuter* possessive pronoun till about 1600; cf.

Genesis i. 12, "herb yielding seed after *his* kind," and iii. 15, "*it* shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise *his* heel." At the close of the 16th century *its* came into use, but slowly. Spenser never has *its;* the Bible of 1611 never; Bacon rarely; Milton only three times in his poetry (*Nativity Ode*, 106, *Par. Lost*, I. 254, IV. 813), and very rarely in his prose; and Shakespeare is doubtful. In no extant text of any of his works printed prior to his death does *its* occur: hence the nine instances in the 1st Folio (five in a single play, *Winter's Tale*) have been suspected as tamperings with the original. For his use of the old idiom cf. *Julius Caesar*, I. 2. 123, 124, "that same eye... did lose *his* lustre."

injurious, III. 2. 195, 'insulting,' like F. *injurieux*; cf. Pope, *Iliad*, II. 274, "Thus with injurious taunts attacked the throne." So *injury* = 'abusive speech, calumny' in 3 *Henry VI.* IV. 1. 107; cf. Bacon, "He fell to bitter invectives...and spake all the injuries he could devise of Charles."

interlude, I. 2. 6, V. 156 = 'a play performed in the intervals of a festival'; from Lat. *inter*, 'between' + *ludere*, 'to play.' Also used of any slight dramatic piece of a comic nature.

knacks, I. 1. 34, 'pretty trifles, knick-knacks'; commonly used of dress, ornaments for the person. Cf. a song in Bullen's *Lyrics* (p. 129), "Some [ladies] do long for pretty knacks, And some for strange devices." A Celtic word—Welsh *cnec*—meaning first, 'a snap,' as with the fingers; then 'a trick,' and so 'a toy, trifle.'

latch, III. 2. 36, 'moisten'; it is the causal form of *leak* and means 'to drip or cause to drop.' Cf. Swedish *laka*, 'to distil, to fall by drops'; Icelandic *leka*, 'to drip, to *leak*'; provincial English *lecks*, 'droppings,' *leck on*, 'to pour on,' and *latch-pan*, 'a *dripping*-pan' (which has nothing to do with *latch*, 'to catch'). The nearest A. S. word is *leccan*, 'to moisten, wet': thence a verb *letch*, 'to wet,' might have been formed: possibly this verb did exist and simply got merged in the commoner verb *latch*, 'to catch.' At any rate, the important point is that *latch* here means 'to moisten,' and etymologically is connected with *leak*—not with *latch*, 'to catch,' from A. S. *læccan* 'to seize,' nor with F. *lécher*, 'to lick.' (Skeat.)

leviathan, II. 1. 174; then commonly identified with the whale, though Heb. *livyáthán* merely = 'huge monster.' Thus in *Job* xli. and *Psalm* lxxiv. 14 ("Thou brakest the heads of *leviathan* in pieces") *leviathan* = 'crocodile.'

livery, I. 1. 70; in Elizabethan E. = 'any kind of dress, garb'; cf. Milton, *L'Allegro*, 62, "The clouds in thousand liveries dight."

Originally *livery* meant whatever was given (i.e. *delivered*) by a lord to his household, whether food, money or garments (cf. F. *habits de livrée* = 'clothes served out yearly to domestics'). From F. *livrer* = Low Lat. *liberare*, 'to abandon.'

lob, II. 1. 16, 'clown'; cf. Minsheu (1617), "A lobbe, lubber, or clown." Etymologically *lob* = *lubbar* (or *lubber*); cf. "*lubbar* fiend" in *L'Allegro*, 110, where Robin Goodfellow (i.e. Puck) is meant. A Celtic word; cf. Welsh *llob*, 'a dolt.'

lullaby, II. 2. 14, 15; from Swedish *lulla*, 'to *lull*'; cf. Dutch *lullen*, 'to sing in a lulling, humming voice.' All these words are *onomatopœic* (see *pat*, later), being formed from *lu lu* hummed by nurses in lulling children to sleep.

luscious, II. 1. 251, 'pleasant to the sense'—commonly of taste (='delicious'), but also of smell (='fragrant, sweet'), and even of hearing. Probably compounded of *lusty*, 'pleasant' (from *lust*, 'pleasure') + the termination *-ous*.

masque, v. 32, 'an entertainment in which the performers wore *masks* or vizards.' From F. *masque*; but ultimately from Arabic *maskharat*, 'a buffoon, jester, a pleasantry,' which passed into Spanish, thence into French, thence into English. Compare *masquerade*. Also spelt *mask*.

mew, I. 1. 71; a term in falconry; from O. F. *mue* = (1) 'a moulting,' from Lat. *mutare*, 'to change' (i.e. the hawk's feathers), (2) 'the cage where the hawk was kept during the time of *mewing* or *moulting*' (also from *mutare*). "The plural *mews* now means a range of stabling, because the royal stables were rebuilt (A.D. 1534) in a place where the royal falcons had been kept" (Skeat). How popular falconry was at that time is shown by the number of terms peculiar to the sport which Shakespeare and other Elizabethans use.

mimic, III. 2. 19, 'actor'; the 1st Quarto has *Minnick*, the 2nd *Minnock*. The word was misprinted (perhaps because uncommon) as *mimir* in the 1st edition of Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, 1325 ("antics, mummers, *mimics*"), which led Johnson to admit *mimir* into his *Dictionary*. Gk μιμικός, 'imitative,' from μῖμος, 'an actor.'

minimus, III. 2. 329, 'a being of the smallest size,' Lat. *minimus*; cf. *minim*, e.g. in *Paradise Lost*, VII. 482, "minims of nature" = 'tiny creatures.'

misprise; **misprision**; III. 2. 74, 90; O. F. *mesprendre*, 'to mistake,' *mesprision*, 'error, mistake'—from Lat. *prendere* = *prehendere*. Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, IV. 1. 187, "There is some strange misprision in

the princes," i.e. they have been "misled" (189) about Hero. Note that *misprise*='to despise,' *misprision*='scorn,' are quite distinct, coming from F. *mépriser* (Low Lat. *pretiare*).

momentany, I. 1. 143; from Lat. *momentaneus*, just as *momentary* (now used) is from *momentarius*. Cf. Cowley (who died 1667), "no less affrighted with their lasting ignominy, than enticed by their *momentany* glories" (*Essays*, Pitt Press ed. p. 31); the form was common then.

morris, II. 1. 98; usually='morris-dance,' i.e. the *Moorish* dance; from Spanish *morisco*. The Span. *morisco* (Anglicised in Elizabethan E.: cf. 2 *Henry VI.* III. 1. 365, "caper...like a wild Morisco") was from Late Lat. *moriscus*, 'Moorish,' in classical Lat. *Maurus*, Gk Μαῦρος (i.e. 'the dark people').

morrow, IV. 1. 144, 'morning.' These two words and *morn* are cognates, all coming from the Middle E. *morwen*, which was softened from A. S. *morgen*.

murrion, II. 1. 97; commonly spelt *murrain*, and used as noun, not as adjective. Low Lat. *morina*, 'a pestilence among animals'; from Lat. *mori*, 'to die.'

naught, IV. 2. 14. Commonly the form *nought* was used='nothing,' and *naught*='something bad.' In Elizabethan E. the adj. *naught* or *naughty* had the strong sense 'bad, good for *naught*.' Cf. *Henry V.* I. 2. 73, "his title was corrupt and naught." So in *Proverbs*, vi. 12, "a naughty person, a wicked man." From *ne*, the old negative+*aught*.

needs, I. 2. 90, III. 2. 119, 'of necessity.' The genitive case of *need* and a survival of the old adverbial use of the genitive, as in *willes*, 'willingly,' *sothes*, 'truly.' Commonly used with *must*.

newt, II. 2. 11=*an ewt;* for the opposite process, due to careless pronunciation, cf. *adder* (*an adder=a nadder*), *apron* (*an apron=a napron*). *Ewt* is contracted from Middle E. *evete*, 'lizard.'

night-rule, III. 2. 5; commonly explained 'order of the night,' like the colloquialism 'what's the order of the day?' i.e. what are we going to do? Perhaps however the sense is 'night-*revel*.' From the similarity of their older forms *rule* (Lat. *regula*) and *revel* (from *rebellare*) seem to have been confused, and *rule* sometimes to have the sense 'revel.' Cf. "this uncivil rule" in *Twelfth Night*, II. 3. 132 (referring to Sir Toby's revelling). The *Century Dictionary* also cites Drayton's *Polyolbion* xxvii. 251:

> "So blythe and bonny now the lads and lasses are,
> was never seen such rule,
> In any place but here, at bonfire, or at yule."

orange-tawny, I. 2. 96, III. 1. 129, 'of a deep yellow'; cf. Bacon, "Usuers should have Orange-tawney Bonnets" (*Of Usurie*), and Ben Jonson, "The colours of the masquers were varied; the one half in orange-tawny and silver" (*Masque of Beauty*). *tawny*, put for *tanny*, F. *tanné*, *tanned*.

orient, IV. 1. 59, 'bright, lustrous'; in Elizabethan poetry a constant epithet of gems, especially pearls. Shakespeare uses it in five places, and in four of these it qualifies 'pearl'; cf. *Richard III.* IV. 4. 322, *Antony and Cleopatra*, I. 5. 41. So in Milton; cf. *Par. Lost*, IV. 238, "orient pearl and sands of gold," and V. 2. Perhaps, used thus, it first meant 'eastern,' gems coming from the Orient or East; then, as these were bright, *orient* got the general sense 'bright.'

ousel, III. 1. 128; A. S. *ósle*, Germ. *amsel*. Spelt *woosel* in the Quartos and Folios; so again in the Quartos in 2 *Henry IV.* III. 2. 9 ("a *black* ousel"); and probably *woosel* was a popular or provincial form, the *w* being one of those parasitic sounds which, due in the first instance to a word being carelessly spoken, remain when it is written. Conversely *ooze*, soft mud, was originally *woose*. In Shakespeare's time *ousel* was evidently the common word for the ordinary blackbird, and in some (e.g. Yorkshire) dialects it is, I believe, still so used. But in general usage *ousel* is now limited to *Ring-Ousel* (a large species of blackbird, with dark bill and a white ring or crescent on its breast, that haunts moorlands), and *Water-Ousel* or 'Dipper' (a quite distinct species of bird).

owe, II. 2. 79. Originally = 'to possess,' as here; then 'to possess another's property,' whence 'to be in debt for.' Cf. *Macbeth* I. 4, 10, "To throw away the dearest thing he *owed*." Akin to *own*.

pageant, III. 2. 114, 'an exhibition, spectacle'; originally = the moveable scaffold on which the old 'mystery-plays' and shows were acted. Lat. *pagina*, 'a page,' also 'a plank of wood,' and later 'a scaffold of planks' fastened together; cf. Lat. *pangere*, 'to fasten' (Skeat).

passion; then used of any strong emotion or the expression thereof —as anger (III. 2. 74), sorrow (V. 293, 321), sense of humour (V. 70). Lat. *passio*, 'suffering,' from *pati*, 'to suffer.'

pat, III. 1. 2, V. 188, 'fitly, exactly, just at the right moment'; from the verb *pat*, 'to strike.' It represents, says Wedgwood, "the sound of something thrown down upon the ground, as marking the exact moment of a thing being done"—just as "*smack* represents the sound of a blow, or of a sudden fall, in such expressions as knocking a thing *smack* down, cutting it *smack* off." Such words illustrate the principle of *onomato-*

pœia, i.e. the formation of a word that imitates or suggests in its sound the thing or action signified.

patch, III. 2. 9, 'paltry fellow, clown'; cf. *Tempest*, III. 2. 71, "What a pied ninny's this! Thou scurvy patch!" The professional jester or fool was called a *patch* from his parti-coloured or *patch*-like dress (cf. IV. 1. 215, "man is but a *patched* fool"); Wolsey had two jesters so named.

pelting, II. 1. 91; akin to *paltry*, and connected with Swedish *paltor*, 'rags'—hence 'rubbish, refuse.' In Shakespeare *pelting*='contemptible, paltry'; cf. *Lear*, II. 3. 18, "poor pelting villages," and *Measure for Measure*, II. 2. 112, "every pelting petty officer." We find in Elizabethan writers *pelter*, 'a mean person,' *peltry*, 'trash,' *peltingly*, 'in a contemptible manner.'

pensioner, II. 1. 10, 'personal attendant'; familiar in this sense to Shakespeare's audience, since Henry VIII. and Elizabeth had a body-guard of young nobles termed 'Pensioners'—similar to the 'Queen's Gentlemen-at-arms' now. Cf. Florio, *Worlde of Wordes* (1598), "*Mazziére*, a macebearer, a verger, a sergeant of the mace. Also a halberdier or poleaxe man, such as the *Queene of Englands gentlemen pencioners* are." So in *Merry Wives*, II. 2. 79, "earls, nay, which is more, pensioners." They had very rich uniforms adorned with gold-lace and jewels; hence probably the allusion in II. 1. 11 ("In their gold coats"). Called *Pensioners* from their *pension*, i.e. stipend; Lat. *pensio*, 'a payment.'

pert, I. 1. 13; in a good sense='lively,' 'alert'; cf. Milton, *Comus*, 118, "the pert faeries and dapper elves." Really for *perk*='smart' in Middle E.; but confused in form and sense with *malapert* from Lat. *male*+*expertus*, 'too experienced,' hence 'too sharp, saucy.'

plain-song, III. 1. 134=a melody in its simplest form without variations or *descant* (such as Milton attributes to the elaborate song of the nightingale, *Par. Lost*, IV. 603). Cf. Jeremy Taylor, "after the angel had told his message in plain song, the whole chorus joined in descant." The phrase was a traditional description of the cuckoo's simple, monotonous note; cf. Skelton, *Phyllyp Sparrowe*,

> "To kepe just playne songe,
> Our chanters shall be your cuckoue."

quaint, II. 1. 99, II. 2. 7; O. F. *coint* from Lat. *cognitus*, 'well-known'—cf. *acquaint*=Lat. *adcognitare*. Used originally='knowing,' 'prudent.' Cf. Hampole's *Psalter*, *Ps.* cxix. 98, "Abouen myn enmys quaynt *th*ou me made," where the A. V. has *wiser*: in the same work *quayntis*=*prudentia*, 'cunning'—e.g. "quayntis of *th*e deuel" (Bramley's

ed. pp. 9, 425). But later, F. *coint*, being wrongly supposed to come from Lat. *comptus*, 'adorned,' got the sense 'trim.' This influenced E. *quaint*, which also got the sense 'trim,' and so "*compt*, neat, fine" (Cotgrave), 'pretty.' Shakespeare always uses *quaint* thus; cf. "my quaint Ariel," *The Tempest*, I. 2. 317; "a gown more quaint, more pleasing," *The Taming of the Shrew*, IV. 3. 102. Now *quaint* = 'odd,' 'eccentric'; so that its original meaning has quite passed away.

quern, II. 1. 36, 'a handmill for grinding corn,' made of two corresponding stones. Chaucer says of Samson in captivity, "they made him at the querne grynde," *Monkes Tale*, 84. A.S. *cweorn*, from a root 'to grind.'

quill, III. 1. 131, 'pipe'; often so used, especially = 'shepherd's pipe': cf. Spenser, *Shepheards Calender*, *June*, "homely shepheards quill," and *Lycidas*, 188. To "tune the quill" was a common phrase; cf. the MS. poem ascribed to Milton, "The sacred sisters tune their quills." Here the reference is to the shrill notes of the wren. Apparently *quill* is from O. F. *quille*, 'a ninepin' = Germ. *kegel*, the connecting link being the notion of slender, tapering shape.

rehearse, I. 2. 105, III. 1. 75, 'to recite a piece previously to public exhibition,' i.e. by way of preparation. In V. 404 = 'to repeat, say.' From O. F. *rehercer*, 'to harrow over again' = (by metaphor) 'to go over the same ground,' i.e. repeat. Cf. modern F. *herse*, 'a harrow'; Lat. *herpex*.

rere- (or **rear-**)**mice**, II. 2. 4. A. S. *hréremús* = 'a bat,' so called from the flapping of its wings; from A.S. *hréran*, 'to agitate' + *mús*, 'a mouse.' Cf. the provincial word '*flitter*-mouse,' 'a bat,' i.e. a *fluttering* mouse.

rote, V. 404; always in this phrase *by rote* = 'by heart,' literally 'in a beaten track or *route*'; cf. *routine*. From O. F. *rote*, modern F. *route*, 'way' = Lat. *rupta* (i.e. *rupta via*), 'a way *broken* through obstacles' (Lat. *rumpere*, to 'break').

round, II. 1. 140; **roundel**, II. 2. 1; 'a dance in a circle' (as we say, 'a round dance'), in which all joined hands. Cf. *Comus*, 143, 144, "Come, knit hands, and beat the ground, In a light fantastic round." Commonly *roundel*, like F. *rondeau*, = 'a kind of ballad or poem containing a line which recurs or comes *round* again.'

russet, III. 2. 21; commonly = 'red, reddish,' from O. F. *rousset*, a diminutive of *roux*, 'reddish,' Lat. *russus*. But that *russet* could then be used = 'grey, ash-coloured' is certain; cf. *Batman*, speaking of paints, "Blacke and white [mixed] maketh a russet" (1582 ed. p. 395); and Cotgrave (1611), "Gris: gray, light-russet, ash-coloured."

sad, IV. 1. 100, 'grave, serious'; a common meaning then. Cf. *Henry V.* IV. 1. 318, "the sad and solemn priests"; and Milton, *Par. Lost*, VI. 541, "in his face I see sad resolution." The original sense was 'sated,' A.S. *sæd* being akin to Lat. *satis*, 'enough.'

shrewd; in II. 1. 33='mischievous'; in III. 2. 323='shrewish.' Middle E. *schrewed*, the p. p. of *schrewen*, 'to curse': hence in a general sense='bad,' the context showing what particular kind of badness is meant. Cf. "shrewd news"=bad news, *John*, V. 5. 14; "a shrewd turn"=a bad turn, *All's Well*, III. 5. 71. The good sense 'clever,' 'sharp' that *shrewd* now bears is rare in Shakespeare.

sort, III. 2. 13; used several times by Shakespeare contemptuously='set, company'; cf. *Richard II.* IV. 246, "a sort of traitors," *Richard III.* V. 3. 316, "a sort of vagabonds." More commonly='kind species'; cf. III. 2. 159, 388. F. *sorte*, Lat. *sors*, 'a lot.'

thorough, II. 1. 3, 5; a later form of *through* (cf. Germ. *durch*). Then not uncommon; cf. Marlowe, *Faustus* (1604), III. 106, "And make a bridge thorough the moving air." Used by modern writers sometimes for the sake of the metre; cf. Coleridge, *Ancient Mariner*, 64, "Thorough the fog it came," and Tennyson, "Thoro the black-stemm'd pines only the far river shines" (*Juvenilia*). From this later form we have *thorough*, the adj.='complete,' and *thoroughly*.

thrum, V. 291. The original notion was 'end,' 'edge'; cf. Icelandic *thrömr*, 'edge'; cognates Gk *τέρμα*, 'end,' Lat. *terminus*. Hence in weaving=the edge of the warp, i.e. the tufted ends of the threads.

triumph, I. 1. 19; Lat. *triumphus*=Gk *θρίαμβος*, 'a hymn to Bacchus'; in Elizabethan E. used of any great festivity or public show. Cf. Bacon's Essay *Of Masques and Triumphs*. So often in Milton; cf. *L'Allegro*, 119, 120,

> "Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
> In *weeds of peace*, high triumphs hold."

troth, II. 2. 36=*truth*, of which it is only another form. Cf. the verb *trow*, literally 'to believe to be *true*' (A. S. *tréowe*). Cf. *Coriolanus*, IV. 5. 198, "He was too hard for him directly, to say the troth on't"; and *Cymbeline*, V. 5. 274, "Now fear is from me, I'll speak troth."

vaward, IV. 1. 110, 'forepart'; another spelling of *vanward*=O. F. *avantwarde*, 'foreguard.' For a similar abbreviation of F. *avant*, 'before,' cf. *vaunt-courier*=F. *avant-coureur*, 'forerunner,' in *King Lear*, III. 2. 5.

virtuous, III. 2. 367, full of *virtue*='power, efficacy' (III. 1. 143); applied especially—as here—to the medicinal properties of herbs. Cf. Milton, *Comus*, 621, "In every virtuous plant and healing herb."

vixen, III. 2. 324. Middle E. *vixen* or *fixen*, 'a she-fox'; "answering to A.S. *fyx-en*, made from *fox* by vowel-change of *o* to *y*, with fem. suffix *-en;* precisely as A.S. *gyden*, a goddess, from *god*, a god" (Skeat). (1) Note *v=f:* "the Southern [dialect] was fond, as it still is, of using *v* where the other dialects had *f*" (Morris); e.g. 'vallow'='fallow' in Devonshire. (2) In Old English *-en* was a common feminine suffix.

waste, 'to spend,' II. 1. 57; cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, III. 4. 12, (friends) "That do converse and waste the time together."

waxen, II. 1. 56. Here *-en* is the old plural termination used in the Midland dialects of English, corresponding with the Northern *-es* and the Southern *-eth.* It began to get obsolete in literary English about the end of the 15th cent. (though in the speech of the people it lasted much longer—indeed, in certain provincial dialects is still preserved). Spenser, a lover of archaic forms, has it often; Shakespeare very rarely. An instance of the late survival of the form is *been* or *ben*='are'; cf. *Pericles*, II. *prologue* 28, "Where when men *been*."

weed, II. 1. 256, II. 2. 71, 'dress'; A. S. *wǽd*, 'garment.' Often used so by Elizabethans; cf. "weeds of peace," *Troilus and Cressida* III. 3. 239 (and also in Milton's *L'Allegro*, 120—see *triumph*). Now limited to the phrase 'widow's weeds,' except in poetry; cf. Tennyson, "In words like weeds I'll wrap me o'er" (*In Memoriam*, v.).

welkin, III. 2. 356, 'sky'; properly a plural word='clouds'; cf. the Middle E. form *welken*=A.S. *wolcnu*, 'clouds,' plural of *wolcen*, 'a cloud.' Cognate Germ. *wolke.* For the plural termination *-en* (*welk-en*) see e*y*ne.

wood, II. 1. 192, 'frantic'; cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 740, "frenzies wood," and *Faerie Queene*, II. 4. 11, "the tempest of his passion wood." In *Faerie Queene*, III. 11. 27 *woodness*='madness.' A. S. *wód.* Cognates: Germ. *wuth*, 'rage,' and *Wóden*, or *Odin*, 'the furious god' (whence our *Wednesday*=A. S. *wódnesdæg*, 'Woden's day').

wot, III. 2. 422, IV. 1. 169; present tense, 1st pers. sing., of the 'anomalous' verb *wit*, 'to know,' Middle E. *witen*, A. S. *witan.* The Bible (1611) preserves the past tense *wist*, e.g. in *Mark* ix. 6, "he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid." Akin to Germ. *wissen*, 'to know'; also to Lat. *videre*, 'to see,' and Gk *ἰδεῖν*.

APPENDIX.

I.

MILTON AND *A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM*.

"Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild,"

L'Allegro, 133, 134.

I cannot help thinking that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was one of the plays which Milton had in mind when he wrote those lines. Certainly there is no play of Shakespeare to which they seem more applicable, and none, I should say, to which Milton's works contain more frequent resemblances. These I thought that it would be interesting to bring together. Of the passages, however, quoted here, some are meant to be regarded merely as illustrations, not reminiscences, of the play. The italics in the extracts are mine.

I. 1. 76—78:

Cf. *Comus*, 737—744, the passage on Virginity, in which the metaphor of the rose is introduced with much the same effect.

I. 1. 134—140:

Cf. *Par. Lost*, x. 895—908, the lines on the evils incident to the lover's state and to wedlock.

I. 1. 185: cf. *Lycidas*, 48, "when first the white-thorn blows."

I. 1. 207, II. 1. 243:

Cf. *Par. Lost*, I. 1. 254, 255:

"The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven."

(Hartley Coleridge has the line, "One sinful wish would make a hell of heaven.")

II. 1. 25:

Cf. *Comus*, 423, "May *trace* huge forests, and unharboured heaths";

also the fourth draft of *Par. Lost* in the Cambridge MSS.: "The angel Gabriel...*tracing* Paradise...passes by the station of y^e^ Chorus." (The verb *trace* is used by Ben Jonson also in this uncommon sense 'to wander through'; cf. *The Satyr:*

"Only we are free to trace
All his grounds, as he to chase.")

II. 1. 29:

Cf. *Comus*, 1003, "far above, in *spangled sheen*." (In the same speech, l. 1021, occurs the rare epithet *sphery*—"Higher than the *sphery* chime"—used only there by Milton and only in II. 2. 99 of this play by Shakespeare.)

II. 1. 34—38:

Cf. *L'Allegro*, 105—114, the description of "the drudging goblin" = Robin Goodfellow.

II. 1. 39:

Cf. *Par. Lost*, IX. 634—640:

"As when a wandering fire,
.....
Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends,
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
Misleads the amazed *night-wanderer* from his way."

II. 1. 55:

Cf. *L'Allegro*, 32, "And *Laughter holding* both *his sides*."

II. 1. 69:

Cf. *Comus*, 139, "The nice Morn, on the *Indian steep*." (I hardly think that this line should be held to support the reading *steep*, not *steppe*, in the play. Very likely, Milton read *Midsummer-N. D.* in the 1st Folio Version, 1623, and had not seen the 1st Quarto, in which alone *steppe* occurs. Personally, I believe *steppe* to be wrong; see the note on II. 1. 69.)

II. 1. 29, 84, 141:

Cf. *Par. Lost*, I. 781—783:

"faery elves,
Whose *midnight revels*, by a forest-side
Or *fountain*, some belated peasant sees."

II. 1. 126:

Cf. *Comus*, 117, 118:

"And on the *tawny* sands and shelves
Trip the pert faeries and the dapper elves."

For *tawny* the Cambridge MS. has *yellow*.

II. 1. 108, 129:

Cf. *Lycidas*, 136—138:

"Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and *wanton winds*, and gushing brooks,
On whose *fresh lap* the swart-star sparely looks."

II. 1. 217—219:

Cf. *Comus*, 393—403.

II. 1. 249—251:

Cf. *Comus*, 543—545:

"I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle" (=Shakespeare's *woodbine*).

II. 1. 255:

Cf. *Par. Lost*, IX. 524, 525:

"Oft he bowed
His turret crest, and sleek *enamelled* neck";

said of Satan as he appears to Eve in the form of a serpent.

III. 2. 61:

Cf. *Nativity Ode*, 75, "in their *glimmering orbs* did glow" (said of the stars). There, as here, *glimmer* denotes waning light; and *orb*='sphere.'

III. 2. 379:

Cf. *Il Penseroso*, 59, "While Cynthia checks her *dragon* yoke" (=team).

III. 2. 380:

Cf. *Song on May Morning*, "the bright morning-star, *day's harbinger*."

III. 2. 381, 382:

Cf. *Nativity Ode*, 232—234:

"The flocking *shadows* pale
Troop to the infernal jail;
Each fettered *ghost* slips to his several grave,"

i.e. at the approach of morn. We may note *shadow*=spirit; cf. III. 2. 347, V. 430.

III. 2. 384:

Cf. *On the Death of a Fair Infant*, 29, 31:

"Yet can I not persuade me thou art dead,
.....
Or that thy beauties lie in *wormy bed*."

III. 2. 387:

Cf. *Il Penseroso*, 58, "Smoothing the rugged *brow* of *Night*."

III. 2. 389:

Cf. *Il Penseroso*, 122—124:

"Till civil-suited *Morn* appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the *Attic boy* to hunt";

i.e. *Cephalus*, "the Morning's love."

III. 2. 391:

Cf. *L'Allegro*, 59, 60:

"Right against *the eastern gate*,
Where the great sun begins his state."

(Other poets borrowed the phrase. Cf. Browne, *Britannia's Pastorals*, I. 5:

"the Morne doth looke
Out of *the Easterne Gates*";

and again in the *Pastorals*, II. 5.)

IV. 1. 102:

Cf. *Comus* 1013 *et seq.*, the Epilogue spoken by "the Spirit."

IV. 1. 103:

Cf. *Il Penseroso*, 67, "To behold the *wandering* moon."

V. 37:

Cf. *Par. Lost*, II. 90—92:

"The vassals of his anger, when the scourge
Inexorably, and the *torturing hour*,
Calls us to penance."

(The phrase has also been adopted by Gray, *Hymn to Adversity*. For another echo of this play in Gray, cf. the *Elegy*, 114, "Slow through the *church-way path* we saw him borne.")

V. 398—421:

Cf. the *Vacation Exercise*, 59—64, for the notion of the fairies coming to dance "upon the hearth"—apparently a sign of favour—and blessing children "in nativity":

"Good luck befriend thee, son; for, at thy birth,
The faery ladies danced upon the hearth;
Thy drowsy nurse hath sworn she did them spie
Come tripping to the room where thou didst lie;
And, sweetly singing round about thy bed,
Strow all their blessings on thy sleeping head."

II.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM, II. I. 148—168.

That there is an allusion in this passage to Queen Elizabeth is practically certain. Such complimentary references to her maidenhood and "imperial" majesty (cf. 163 and *Henry V.* Chorus v. 30) occur frequently in the poetry of that time. We may safely identify her with the "fair vestal." Further, some editors believe that there is an allusion to the famous visit she paid to the Earl of Leicester at Kenilworth Castle in July 1575. Lines 148—154 are supposed to refer to the festivities, and lines 155—168 to certain love-intrigues, connected with this visit.

As to lines 148—154: of the festivities with which the Queen was entertained we have a full account (amongst others) in a letter to a friend written by a London merchant, Robert Laneham, who stayed at Kenilworth during the time of the Queen's visit. One of the entertainments (he tells us) was a kind of Masque or water-*fête* given on the great lake in the park. In this Masque various mythological characters appeared on the water. Among them were Triton, who was borne by "a swimming *mermaid*" and bade the waters be still, and Arion, "riding aloft upon his old friend the Dolphin" and singing "a delectable ditty of a song[1]." On another evening there was a display of fireworks by the lake—"*stars* coruscant" Laneham calls them, that shot over the waters. It has been thought that these incidents suggested to Shakespeare the description in lines 148—154, and that the description is really a personal reminiscence—that Shakespeare himself witnessed these festivities at Kenilworth. His native place is only 13 miles distant. In 1575 he was 11 years old. Edward Arden, the head of his mother's family, is supposed to have been at the castle at the time. It seems to me likely that Shakespeare was taken from Stratford to Kenilworth—still more that in this passage he is speaking of the entertainments, whether from memory or report[2].

[1] It was on this occasion that the incident mentioned in the note on III. I. 36—47 occurred. Scott introduces it in *Kenilworth*, chap. 30.

[2] No student accepts, therefore I do not think it necessary to give at length, Warburton's interpretation, of which the main points were that—(1) the "mermaid" = Mary, Queen of Scots, so called because of her island-realm, her beauty and her unchastity; (2) the "dolphin" = her husband, the Dauphin of France; (3) the "rude sea" = her sea-girt kingdom Scotland, which, turbulent under the Regency, became more peaceful on the Queen's return from France in 1561; (4) the "stars" = the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, who fell in her plots against Elizabeth and the Duke of Norfolk whom she was to marry.

As to lines 155—168: the view has been put forward that the picture of Cupid taking "a certain aim" is an allegory symbolising the ambitious design of Leicester to win the hand of the Queen in marriage; while the "little western[1] flower" has been variously identified with (1) Lettice[2], Countess of Essex, who was involved in an intrigue with Leicester, (2) Amy Robsart. But these identifications are mere conjecture. There is no need to think that Shakespeare intended any personal allusion other than that to Elizabeth herself.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM, IV. 1. 47—49.

There is no satisfactory explanation of this passage. According to the natural way of taking it, *woodbine* is the subject and *honeysuckle* the object of *entwist*; different plants are intended; and the sentence corresponds in form with the next. Now 'woodbine,' though commonly used = honeysuckle, was also variously used by Elizabethans = (1) bindweed or convolvulus, (2) ivy. If we had only the present passage to consider, I should without demur take 'woodbine' = convolvulus here. Compare Ben Jonson's picture (in his Masque *The Vision of Delight*, 1617) of the bindweed or convolvulus growing up round and intertwining itself with the more robust plant, the honeysuckle:

"behold!
How the blue bindweed doth itself infold
With honeysuckle."

The two other passages, however, in which Shakespeare uses 'woodbine' have to be noticed, viz. II. 1. 251 of this play and *Much Ado*, III. 1. 30. Comparison of the two passages shows that 'woodbine' means the same plant in both; and that this plant is the honeysuckle is clear from the instance in *Much Ado*, because "the *woodbine* coverture" (l. 30) or arbour in which Beatrice hides has just before (ll. 8, 9) been described as an arbour "where *honeysuckles*...Forbid the sun to enter." The fact therefore that in the only two other places in Shakespeare where 'woodbine' occurs it means honeysuckle, is certainly a very strong objection against its meaning convolvulus here. To some editors the objections seem conclusive, and the explanations have been offered:

(1) That 'woodbine' signifies the whole plant of the honeysuckle, and 'honeysuckle' only the actual blossoms; but this notion does not suit 'entwist':

[1] i.e. English; cf. "thronèd by the west," l. 158.
[2] On her husband's death Leicester married her.

(2) That 'honeysuckle' is in apposition to 'woodbine'—the correct punctuation being "So doth the woodbine, the sweet honeysuckle, etc." —and that 'entwist' either (*a*) is intransitive = 'twists itself,' or (*b*) governs '*fingers*.' But surely only the ivy is connected with the elm.

It will be noticed that according to both (1) and (2) only one plant—the woodbine or honeysuckle—is introduced, whereas the whole drift of the passage implies, I think, that two plants are intended. It seems to me, on the whole, that the objections to (1) and (2) are really greater than the objection to taking 'woodbine' in the sense 'convolvulus.' 'Convolvulus' therefore is the meaning given in the *Notes*.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM, IV. I. 78.

Though the explanation of "Dian's *bud*" given in the note on this passage appears to me the most probable, there is another view worth mentioning, viz. that the "herb" with which Oberon touched Titania's eyes was a rose, and that Shakespeare chose the rose as a symbol. Some probability is lent to this view by a passage in Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1592). He makes Friar Bacon prophesy that there will one day flourish in England a flower which shall far surpass all others; and this flower, "So rich and fair a *bud*," he calls "*Diana's* rose" (scene XVI. 47, 62). Now, the passage is allegorical: "*Diana's* rose" is "the rose of England's Virgin Queen," "Diana" or "Cynthia" being the title constantly applied by poets of the time to Queen Elizabeth, in allusion to her maidenhood. It is possible that Shakespeare used "Diana's bud" exactly in the same sense that Greene used "Diana's rose," i.e. with a complimentary reference to Elizabeth; and that these lines—indeed, the whole notion of this healing herb—are an allegorical way of saying that the maidenhood of the Queen is superior to the power of Cupid. We must remember that such flattering allusions, strange and far-fetched as they may seem to us, were very common then, and, being common, were readily understood by Elizabethan audiences. It is easy to see how, if *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was acted before the Queen, a clever actor can have made her and the spectators understand who the "Dian" of the poet's fancy was.

As regards Shakespeare's own relations with the Queen, Mr Boas says:

"How far Shakspere came into personal relations with Elizabeth

herself it is impossible to tell. Ben Jonson speaks of her as being 'taken[1]' by his flights, and Chettle declares that she

'Graced his desert,
And to his lays opened her royal heart.'

It is certain that many of his dramas were performed at Court, and there is an early tradition that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written at the express desire of Elizabeth, who wished to see Falstaff in love. But there is no evidence, except a statement of Rowe, that the Queen showed Shakspere any exceptional favour, and the references to her in his works are, as is well known, surprisingly few. In the last chorus to *Henry V.* she is styled 'our gracious empress,' and she is without doubt 'the fair vestal thronèd by the West' of Oberon's vision in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. But the profuse compliments of Greene and Peele are lacking, and it is noticeable that Chettle complains that on the Queen's death 'the silver-tongued Melicert,' as he calls Shakspere, did not 'drop from his honied muse one sable tear'."—*Shakspere and his Predecessors*, pp. 121, 122.

III.

SOME POINTS OF THE PLAY'S FAIRY LORE ILLUSTRATED.

II. 1. 40, 41:

"Those that Hobgoblin call you, and *sweet* Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck."

There is, I suppose, an allusion here to the old belief that if you wished a fairy or spirit to be friendly you should speak to (or of) him in a complimentary way. Thus the Irish called the fairies "good[2] people"—the Scotch "good neighbours." The elves of German and Scandinavian mythology were propitiated by flattering names. Similarly the Greeks called the Furies by the euphemistic title "Eumenides" ("the gracious powers").

IV. 2. 4: I have no doubt that the disputed word "transported" means "carried off by the fairies," and that it was almost a technical term in this connection. In one of the best known works on supernatural powers and witchcraft published during the 16th century—Bodin's[3] *De la Demonomanie des Sorciers* (1580)—there is a long discussion (bk. II. chap. 4) of the question whether men can be "*transporté*" from one place to another ("*d'un lieu en l'autre*") by

[1] i.e. charmed by his poetic flights. [2] Cf. the title "Robin *Good*fellow."
[3] Bodin (1530—1596) believed in witchcraft.

the agency of spirits. Reginald Scot has a chapter (bk. v. chap. 7) in his *Discoverie* (1584) "concerning *transportations*." And in the *Discourse of Spirits* appended to the 3rd edition (1665) of Scot's work occurs the following in a section that deals with fairies: "many [i.e. men] have been taken away by the sayd Spirits, for a fortnight or a month together, being carryed with them in Chariots through the Air, over Hills and Dales...till at last they have been found lying in some meadow or Mountain, bereaved of their senses."

That I believe, was the sort of "transportation" that Starveling supposed to have happened to Bottom.

His transformation by Puck may be illustrated similarly from current superstition. Mr Thoms says, "there can be little question that the possibility of such transformations[1] was in his [Shakespeare's] day an article of popular belief." He quotes from Scot's *Discoverie* the recipe of the drug by which magicians claimed to be able to fix an ass's head on a man. The great magician Dr Faustus is said in the narrative of his life and adventures entitled the *Faust-book* (1592) to have invited some friends to dinner and then to have treated every one of them as Puck treated Bottom. The belief in such things must, it is obvious, have affected very considerably the spirit in which some members of Shakespeare's Elizabethan audiences regarded the incident of the "ass's nole."

In Bottom's case indeed the transformation is made to appear almost natural by reason of his asinine self-conceit. Fostered by the admiration and 'hero-worship' of his comrades, his "egregious self-complacency develops to the point where his metamorphosis at the hands of Puck seems merely an exquisitely fitting climax to a natural process of evolution" (Boas).

IV.

It is rare to find Shakespeare commenting on his own art and profession. He reminds us of an important truth when he makes Theseus hint (v. 213, 214) that the imagination of the audience must

[1] Bodin (bk. II. chap. 6) mentions several instances of transformations; and in one case, says Scot ironically, the man transformed "did eate provender and haie!... Bodin's ass-headed man must either eate haie, or nothing" (pp. 76, 79). Now every reader of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* will recall Bottom's request for "a peck of provender" and "a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow."

"amend" the inadequacy of the stage-representation. Still more striking emphasis is laid on this point in *Henry V.*, where the Chorus, as the mouthpiece of the dramatist, more than once bids the spectator exercise to the full his "imaginary forces" in seeking to realise to the mental eye the scope and splendour of incidents and pageants which the poorly equipped Elizabethan playhouse could but shadow forth under the crudest outward forms. "Work, work your thoughts," urges the Chorus,

"And eke out our performance with your mind."

As in that play (see especially the Prologues to Acts I. and III.), so here in the "interlude" of the Clowns and the comments thereon, Shakespeare shows us in effect (to quote Dowden) "that it is the business of the dramatist to set the spectator's imagination to work. that the dramatist must rather appeal to the mind's eye than to the eye of sense, and that the co-operation of the spectator with the poet is necessary. For the method of Bottom and his company is precisely the reverse, as Gervinus has observed, of Shakespeare's own method [e.g. of presenting fairyland]. They are determined to leave nothing to be supplied by the imagination. Wall must be plaistered; Moonshine must carry lanthorn and bush"; and the duke's humorous objection that "the man i' the moon" ought to be inside his lanthorn is a perfectly fair *reductio ad absurdum* of their prosaic literalness.

It is in the matter of scenic accessories that the great difference between the modern and the Elizabethan theatre lies. In Shakespeare's time "audiences felt no need for such aids to illusion; their imagination instantly supplied the want. They saw whatever the poet required them to see—as a child sees whatever is suggested to its fancy. For the spectators were children alike in the freshness and in the force of their imagination. If only a placard were hung on one of the doors of the stage bearing in large letters the name of Paris or of Venice, the spectators were at once transported to France or Italy...This alacrity of imagination on the part of popular audiences was unquestionably an advantage to the English stage in its youth. If an actor made a movement as though he were plucking a flower, the scene was at once understood to be a garden; as in *Henry VI.* [Part I. II. 4], where the adoption of the red and white rose as party badges is represented. If an actor spoke as though he were standing on a ship's deck in a heavy sea, the convention was at once accepted; as in the famous scene in *Pericles* (III. 2). Shakespeare did not hesitate to take advantage of this accommodating humour on the part of his public" (Brandes).

HINTS ON METRE.

I. Regular Type of Blank Verse.

Blank verse[1] consists of unrhymed lines, each of which, if constructed according to the regular type, contains five feet, each foot being composed of two syllables and having a strong stress or accent on the second syllable, so that each line has five stresses, falling respectively on the even syllables, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10. Here is an example from this play:

"The coúrse | of trúe | love név|er díd | run smóoth" (I. 1. 134).

The rhythm of a line like this is a "rising" rhythm.

Blank verse prior to Marlowe, the great Elizabethan dramatist whose work influenced Shakespeare, was modelled strictly on this type. Further, this early blank verse was what is termed "end-stopt": that is to say, there was almost always *some* pause, however slight, in the sense, and consequently in the rhythm, at the close of each line; while the couplet was normally the limit of the sense. As an example of this "end-stopt," strictly regular verse, take the following extract from the first play written in blank verse, viz. the tragedy called *Gorboduc* (1561):

> "Why should I live and linger forth my time,
> In longer life to double my distress?
> O me most woeful wight! whom no mishap
> Long ere this day could have bereaved hence:
> Mought not these hands by fortune or by fate
> Have pierced this breast, and life with iron reft?"

[1] The metre is sometimes called 'iambic pentameter verse,' but this and other terms, with the symbols, of Greek prosody should be avoided, since classical metres, Greek and Latin, are based on a different principle from English prosody. The basis of classical metre is the "quantity" of syllables, and this is represented by the symbols – (long syllable) and ⏑ (short). The basis of English metre is stress or accent (i.e. the stress laid by the voice on a syllable in pronouncing it); and stress should be represented by the symbols ´ (strong stress) and ` (weak).

if the whole of a play were written in verse of this kind the effect, obviously, would be intolerably monotonous. Blank verse before Marlowe *was* intolerably monotonous, and in an especial degree unsuited to the drama, which with its varying situations and moods needs a varied medium of expression more than any other kind of poetry. Marlowe's great service to metre, carried further by Shakespeare, was to introduce variations into the existing type of the blank decasyllabic measure. In fact, analysis of the blank verse of any writer really resolves itself into a study of his modifications of the "end-stopt" regular type.

II. Shakespeare's Variations of the Regular Type.

The chief variations found in Shakespeare (some of them often combined in the same line) are these:

1. *Weak stresses.* As we read a passage of blank verse our ear tells us that the stresses or accents are not always[1] of the same weight in all the five feet of each line. Thus in the line

"To déath, | or tò | a vów | of sín|gle life" (I. 1. 121)

we feel at once that the stress in the 2nd foot is not equal to that which comes in the other feet. A light stress like this is commonly called a "weak stress." Two weak stresses may occur in the same line—rarely together. The foot in which a weak stress is least frequent is the first. It is perhaps with prepositions that a weak stress, in any foot, occurs most often.

Here are passages with weak stresses:

"Hippó|lytà, | I wóo'd | thee with | my swórd,
And wón | thy lóve, | dóing | thee ín|juriès;
But Í | will wéd | thee ìn | anóth|er kéy,
With pómp, | with tri|umph, àǹd | with rév|elling" (I. 1. 16—19).

"Máking | it mó|mentá|ny às | a soúnd,
Swíft as | a shá|dow, shórt | as á|ny dréam;
Briéf as | the líght|ning ìn | the cól|lied níght" (I. 1. 143—145).

[1] Dr Abbott estimates that rather less than one line of three has the full number of five strong stresses, and that about two lines out of three have four strong stresses.

"And héard | a mér|maid, òn | a dól|phin's báck,
Útt'ring | such dúl|cet ànd | harmón|ious bréath,
That thè | rude seá | grew cív|il àt | her sóng,
And cér|tain stárs | shot mád|ly fròm | their sphéres"
(II. 1. 150—153).

It may not be amiss to remind the young student that in reading a passage of Shakespeare aloud he should be careful to give the weak stresses as weak, i.e. not lay the same emphasis indiscriminately on all the stressed syllables.

2. *Inverted stresses*[1]. The strong stress may fall on the first of the two syllables that form a foot—as the student will have observed in several of the lines quoted above. The following extracts also contain examples:

"Knów of | your youth, | exám|ine wéll | your blóod" (I. 1. 68).
"Devoút|ly dótes, | dótes in | idól|atrỳ" (I. 1. 109).
"Swift as | a shá|dow, shórt | as án|y dréam" (I. 1. 144).
"Thérefore | the móon, | the góv|ernèss | of flóods,
Pále in | her án|ger, wásh|es áll | the áir" (II. 1. 103, 104).
"Márking | th' embárk|ed trá|ders òn | the flóod" (II. 1. 127).
"And, gén|tle Púck, | táke this | transfórm|ed scálp" (IV. 1. 69).
"What rév|els áre | in hánd? | Ís there | no pláy
To eáse | the án|guish òf | a tór|t'ring hóur?" (V. 1. 36, 37).
"Mérry | and trág|icàl! | tédious | and briéf!" (V. 1. 58).

Inversion of the stress is most frequent after a pause: hence the foot in which it occurs most often is the first (i.e. after the pause at the end of the preceding line); this is particularly the case in the early plays. There may be two inversions in one line (even more—cf. III. 2. 205, 206); but they are seldom consecutive. This shifting of the stress generally *emphasises* a word. It also varies the regular "rising rhythm" of the normal blank verse by a "falling rhythm."

3. *Extra syllables.* Instead of ten syllables a line may contain eleven or even twelve. An extra syllable, unstressed, may occur at any point in the line before or after a pause: hence it is commonest in the last foot (the end of a line being the commonest place for a

[1] Cf. Mr Robert Bridges's work, *Milton's Prosody*, pp. 19—21, where Milton's use of inversions is fully analysed and illustrated in a way that helps the study of Shakespeare's inversions.

pause), and frequent about the middle of a line (where there is often a break in the sense or rhythm). Compare

"A góod | persuá|sion : thére|fore, héar | me, Hér(mía)" (I. 1. 156).
"And wíll | you rént | our án|cient lóve | asún(der)" (III. 2. 215)?
"Thérefore | be oút | of hópe, | of qués(tion), | of doúbt" (III. 2. 279).
"Líttle | agáin ! | nóthing | but lów | and lít(tle) !" (III. 2. 326).
"Thát is, | the mád(man) : | the lóv|er, áll | as frán(tic),
Sees Hél|en's beáu|ty in | a brów | of É(gypt)" (V. 1. 10, 11).
"Here cómes | his gráce | in pér(son). | My nó|ble ún(cle) !" (*Richard II.* II. 3. 82).
"My lórd | 'tis nó(thing). |
No mát|ter, thén, | whó sees (it)" (*Richard II.* V. 2. 58).

An extra syllable, unstressed[1], at the end of a line, as in the first and last of these examples, is variously called a "double ending" and a "feminine ending." The use of the "double ending" becomes increasingly frequent as Shakespeare's blank verse grows more complex. "Double endings" increase[2] from 4 per cent. in *Love's Labour's Lost* to 33 in *The Tempest*, middle plays such as *As You Like It* having a percentage of about 18. The percentage of "double endings" is therefore one of the chief of the metrical tests which help us to fix the date of a play. In fact the use of "double endings" is the commonest of Shakespeare's variations of the normal blank verse. The extra syllable at the end of a line not only gives variety by breaking the regular movement of the ten-syllabled lines, but also, where there is no pause after it, carries on the sense and rhythm to the next line.

Sometimes two extra syllables occur at the end—less commonly, in the middle—of a line. Compare in *Richard II.*

"By síght | of whát | I háve, | your nó|ble cóm(pany)" (II. 3. 18).
"To áll | his lánds | and sígn(ories): | when hé's | retúrn'd" (IV. 1. 89).
"Fírst, to | thy sá|cred státe | wish Í | all háp(piness)" (V. 6. 6).

[1] An extra syllable that bears or would naturally bear a stress is rare in Shakespeare. The use of such syllables at the end of a line is a feature of Fletcher's verse, and the frequent occurrence of them in *Henry VIII.* is one of the metrical arguments that he wrote a good deal of that play. Milton has one or two instances in *Comus*; cf. 633, "Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this (soil)."

[2] The metrical statistics in these "Hints" are taken from various sources.

This licence is specially frequent with the scansion of proper names; compare

"Bé not | afráid ; | she sháll | not hárm | thee, Hél(ena)" (III. 2. 321).

The number of lines with two extra syllables increases much in the later plays of Shakespeare.

4. *Unstopt (or Run-on) verse.* The blank verse of Shakespeare's early plays shows clearly the influence of the rhymed couplet which he had used so much in his very earliest work. In his early blank verse the rhyme indeed is gone, but the couplet form remains, with its frequent pause of sense, and consequently of rhythm, at the end of the first line, and its still more frequent stop at the end of the second. Lines of this type mark only the first step in the evolution of blank verse: freedom in the expression of sense and varied rhythm are still absent; and freedom and variety come only when the sense "runs on" from one line to another.

If at the end of a line there is any pause in the sense, however slight—such a pause for instance as is marked with a comma—the line is termed "end-stopt." If there is no pause in the sense at the end of the line it is termed "unstopt" or "run-on." There is a progressive increase of "unstopt" verse in the plays. The proportion of "unstopt" to "end-stopt" lines is in *Love's Labour's Lost* only 1 in 18 (approximately); in *The Winter's Tale* it is about 1 in 2. The amount, therefore, of "unstopt" verse in a play is another of the metrical tests by which the period of its composition may, to some extent, be inferred.

The rhythm of a line depends greatly on the sense: where there is any pause in the sense there must be a pause in the rhythm. The great merit of "unstopt" blank verse is that the sense by overflowing[1] into the

[1] The overflow is helped by the use of "light" and "weak" endings to a line. 'Light endings" are monosyllables on which "the voice can to a small extent dwell": such as the parts of the auxiliary verbs, *be, have, will, shall, can, do;* pronouns like *I, we, thou, you, he, she, they, who, which,* etc.; and conjunctions such as *when, where, while.* "Weak endings" are those monosyllables over which the voice passes with practically no stress at all—e.g. the prepositions *at, by, for, from, in, of, on, to, with;* also *and, but, if, nor, or, than, that:* all words which go very closely with what follows and therefore link the end of one line with the beginning of the next. The use of these endings belongs to the later plays. "Light endings" are first numerous (21) in *Macbeth* (1606), and "weak endings" (28) in *Antony and Cleopatra* (1608). Some of the early plays have neither "light endings" nor "weak." Some have a very few "light endings." Of "weak endings" no play has more than *two* up till *Antony and Cleopatra.* The proportion of these endings—"light" and "weak"—is therefore another of the metrical tests applied to the later plays (Ingram).

next line tends to carry the rhythm with it, and thus the pauses in the rhythm or time of the verse, instead of coming always at the end, come in other parts of the line.

5. *A syllable slurred.* "Provided there be only one accented syllable, there may be more than two syllables in any foot. 'It is he' is as much a foot as ''tis he'; 'we will serve' as 'we'll serve'; 'it is over' as ''tis o'er.'

"Naturally it is among pronouns and the auxiliary verbs that we must look for unemphatic syllables in the Shakespearian verse. Sometimes the unemphatic nature of the syllable is indicated by a contraction in the spelling. Often, however, syllables may be dropped or slurred in sound, although they are expressed to the sight" (Abbott).

This principle that two unstressed syllables may go in the same foot with one stressed syllable is very important because feet so composed have a rapid, almost trisyllable effect which tends much to vary the normal line. Compare:

"Uncoúple[1] | i' the wés|tern vál|ley; | lét | them gó" (IV. 1. 112).

This licence is specially characteristic of the later plays. These are examples:

"Bút that | the séa, | moúnting | to the[2] wél|kin's chéek"
(*The Tempest*, I. 2. 4).

"And hére | was léft | by the sail|ors. Thoú, | my sláve"
(*The Tempest*, I. 2. 270).

"Hím that | you térm'd, sir, | 'The góod | old lórd, | Gonzá(lo)'"
(*The Tempest*, V. 1. 15).

"My Ré|gan coún|sels wéll: | cóme out | o' the stórm"
(*King Lear*, II. 4. 312).

"I' the lást | night's stórm | I súch | a fél|low sáw"
(*King Lear*, IV. 1. 34).

6. *Omissions.* After a pause or interruption there is sometimes an omission (*a*) of an unstressed syllable (oftenest in the first foot), or (*b*) of a stress, or (*c*) even of a whole foot.

"It is obvious" (says Abbott) "that a syllable or foot may be supplied by a gesture, as beckoning, a movement of the head to listen, or of the hand to demand attention": or the omission may be accounted for by an interruption, such as the entrance of another character, or by a marked pause or break in the sense. Compare

[1] A final *le* (as in 'uncou*ple*') is often slurred thus before a vowel.

[2] Sometimes in such cases the Folio prints *th'*, showing that the word was meant to be slurred (Abbott).

(*a*) "Má|ny yéars | of háp|py dáys | befál" (*Richard II.* I. 1. 20).
"Thén | the whí|ning schóol|boy with | his sát(chel)"
(*As You Like It*, II. 7. 145).

(*b*) "Flátte|rers! [*Turns to Brutus*] | Now Brú|tus thánk | yoursélf!"
(*Julius Cæsar*, V. 1. 45).
"Messá|la! [*Messala turns and salutes*] | Whát says | my gén|eràl?"
(*Julius Cæsar*, V. 1. 70).

(*c*) "Of múch | less vál|ue ís | mý com|panỳ
Than yoúr | good wórds. | [*Pauses and points*] But whó | comes
hére?" (*Richard II.* II. 3. 19, 20).

7. *Lines of irregular length.* Shakespeare uses lines of three feet often; less frequently, lines of two feet; especially to break the course of some very animated speech; half-lines occasionally; brief questions and exclamations, which metrically need not count; and rarely lines with six strong stresses, i.e. Alexandrines[1] (the type of verse which ends each stanza in *The Faerie Queene*).

As a rule, the use of a short line corresponds with something in the sense, e.g. a break (as at the end of a speech), agitation, conversational effect of question and answer, strong emphasis. At the close of a speech a short line gives perhaps greater emphasis, and certainly variety.

There are also, especially in plays later than *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* (the blank verse of which is not notable for deviations from the regular type), numerous lines which look like Alexandrines ("apparent Alexandrines," as Abbott calls them) but which on examination are found not to have six unmistakeable stresses. Thus in each of the following lines of *As You Like It* one syllable or more can be slurred or elided or treated as extra-metrical.

(*a*) "Sháll we | go, cóz? |
Aý. Fare | you wéll, | fair gén(tl'man[2])"
(I. 2. 226).

[1] So called either from Alexandre Paris, an old French poet who used this metre, or from the *Roman d'Alexandre*, a 12th century poem about Alexander the Great, written in rhymed lines of six feet, in couplets. It is the metre of French tragedy (e.g. of the tragedies of Racine and Corneille).

[2] In this and similar cases, such as (*b*), (*d*), the symbol ' is intended to show that a vowel is ignored in the scansion, though heard more or less in pronunciation. There is no means of marking the different degrees of slurring: thus, *conf'rence* represents with fair accuracy the pronunciation which must be given to *conference* in

(*b*) "I cán|not spéak | to hér, | yet shé | urg'd cón(f'rence)" (I. 2. 236).

(*c*) "The flúx | of cóm(pany): | anón, | a cáre|less hérd" (II. 1. 52).

(*d*) "Thís is | no pláce; | this houśe | is bút | a bút(ch'ry)" (II. 3. 27).

(*e*) "That lóv'd | your fáth(er): | the rés|due òf | your fór(tune)" (II. 7. 195).

(*f*) "In bít|ternéss. | The cóm|mon éx|ecú(tioner[1])" (III. 5. 3).

(*g*) "I sée | no móre | in youú | than ín | the órd('n'ry)" (III. 5. 40).

(*h*) "You foól|ish shép|herd, whére|fore dó | you fól(low her)" (III. 5. 47).

(*i*) "Than thát | mix'd in | his chéek; | 'twas júst | the díf(f'rence)" (III. 5. 119).

(*j*) "And hé | did rén|der hím | the móst | unná(t'ral)" (IV. 3. 122).

Again, some seemingly six-foot lines are really "trimeter couplets": that is, "couplets of two verses of three accents each...often thus printed as two separate short verses in the Folio....Shakespeare seems to have used this metre mostly for rapid dialogue and retort, and in comic and the lighter kind of serious poetry" (Abbott).

These, then, are the chief modes by which Shakespeare diversifies the structure of regular blank verse. Their general result has been well summed up thus: that they make the effect of Shakespeare's maturer blank verse rather rhythmical than rigidly metrical, i.e. more a matter of stresses distributed with endless variety than of syllables calculated and accented according to a normal standard. Every student should grasp these variations thoroughly, particularly the first five, and observe the illustrations of them that occur in any play (especially the later plays) that he may be studying.

And he must, of course, remember that scansion depends much on the way in which a writer abbreviates or lengthens sounds, as the metre requires.

Abbreviation comprises all the cases in which a syllable does not

line (*b*), whereas *res'due* in line (*e*) would over-emphasise the slurring sound required in *residue*.

The references here are to the numbering of the lines in the Pitt Press edition of *As You Like It*.

[1] Slurred into something like *execú-shner*.

count metrically—whether it be elided[1], contracted, or slurred. Many abbreviations belong to everyday speech, others to poetical usage.

Of lengthening of sounds the most important example is the scansion of a monosyllable as a whole foot[2].

For full details the student must refer to the standard authority, viz. Dr Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, pp. 344—387.

III. Shakespeare's use of Rhyme.

In his early plays Shakespeare uses the rhymed couplet[3] very largely; but gradually the amount of rhyme declines, so that the proportion of rhymed couplets in a piece is one of the surest indications of the period to which it belongs.

Is there much rhyme? the play is early.
Is there little rhyme? the play is late.

"In *Love's Labour's Lost* there are about two rhymed lines to every one of blank verse. In *The Comedy of Errors* there are 380 rhymed lines to 1150 unrhymed. In *The Tempest* two rhymed lines occur; in *The Winter's Tale* not one" (Dowden).

In applying the rhyme test we must exclude the cases where, as in this play—see pp. xi, xxxiii—there is a special reason for the use of rhyme. Thus the rhyme of the Masque in Act IV. of *The Tempest* has no bearing whatsoever on the date of the play, because Masques were usually written in rhymed measures. Similarly all songs such as we get in *As You Like It*, *The Tempest*, and *The Winter's Tale* must, of course, be excluded.

Let us consider for a moment the reasons which led Shakespeare to adopt blank verse and gradually abandon rhyme.

As a medium of dramatic expression blank verse, of the varied Shakespearian type, has these points of superiority over rhyme:

1. *Naturalness.* Rhyme is artificial. It reminds us, therefore,—perhaps I should say, never lets us forget—that the play *is* a play, fiction and not reality, because in real life people do not converse in

[1] Cf. the occasional elision of *the* and *to* before a vowel, e.g. "Stír up | *th'* Athé|nian youth | to mér|riménts" (I. 1. 12); "*T'*envé|lope ànd | contaín | celés|tial spírits" (*Henry V.* I. 1. 31).

[2] Cf. *moon* (II. 1. 7); *room* (II. 1. 58); *three* (III. 2. 437); *comes* (III. 2. 439); *new* (IV. 1. 40); *snow* (IV. 1. 171); *own* (IV. 1. 197). So *fare* in '*fare*well' is treated as two syllables sometimes.

[3] i.e. of five feet in each line; cf. for instance I. 1. 180—251.

rhyme. Especially in moments of great emotion does rhyme destroy the illusion of reality: we cannot conceive of Lear raving at Goneril in rhymed couplets. Blank verse on the other hand has something of the naturalness of conversation, and naturalness is a very great help towards making fiction appear like truth.

2. *Freedom.* The necessity of rhyming imposes restraint upon a writer such as blank verse obviously does not involve, and often forces him to invert the order of words or even to use a less suitable word. The rhythm too of the rhymed couplet tends strongly to confine the sense within the limits of the couplet, whereas in the blank verse of a skilful writer the sense "runs on" easily from line to line. In fact, in the rhymed couplet the verse is apt to dominate the sense; while in blank verse the sense finds unfettered expression. And so blank verse has not only something of the naturalness but also something of the freedom of conversation.

3. *Variety.* In a paragraph of rhymed couplets the pauses in the sense and therefore in the rhythm are monotonous. We constantly have a pause at the end of the first line and almost always a pause at the end of the second. With the uniformity of a passage composed in this form contrast the varied rhythms of such blank verse as that of *The Tempest*, where the pauses are distributed with ever-changing diversity of cadence.

Again, the rhyme of a long narrative poem when read, or of a short lyric when recited, has a pleasing effect; but in a long spell of spoken verse I think that the sound of rhyme, though at first agreeable to it, gradually tires the ear.

What rhyme we do get in Shakespeare's later plays is mainly at the end of a scene, when it serves to indicate the conclusion, and (less commonly) at the close of a long speech, when it forms a kind of climax. As to the former use Dr Abbott says: "Rhyme was often used as an effective termination at the end of the scene. When the scenery[1] was not changed, or the arrangements were so defective that the change was not easily perceptible, it was, perhaps, additionally desirable to mark that a scene was finished."

And just as rhyme often marks the close of a scene or dramatic situation, so it sometimes marks the close of a chapter in a man's

[1] There was no movable scenery; the only outward indication of the locality intended was some stage 'property'—e.g. "a bed to signify a bed-chamber; a table with pens upon it to signify a counting-house; or a board bearing in large letters the name of the place"—Dowden.

career, and suggests farewell. A striking example of this use of rhyme occurs in *As You Like It*, II. 3. 67—76, where old Adam and Orlando, about to set forth on their expedition, severally bid farewell to their former life. Similarly in *Richard II.* II. 2. 140—147 the rhyme expresses the feeling of the King's favourites that their period of prosperity is over and they are parting for ever; while in V. 5. 109—118, it emphasises the tragedy of the close of Richard's life. Again, in *King Lear* (a comparatively late play, 1605—1606) the banished Kent is made to use rhyme in his leave-taking (I. 1. 183—190). See also *Richard II.* II. 4. 21—24; V. 1. 79—102.

One other noticeable purpose of rhyme is found in plays as late as *Othello* (about 1604) and *Lear*, viz. to express moralising reflections on life and give them a sententious, epigrammatic effect. Dowden instances *Othello*, I. 3. 202—219, and II. 1. 149—161. This use of rhyme is natural because proverbial wisdom so often takes a rhymed form. Maxims stick better in the memory when they are rhymed. See *Richard II.*, II. 1. 7, 8, 27—30.

Prose.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream illustrates Shakespeare's main uses of prose:

(1) For parts where a conversational, rather than a tragic or poetic, effect is desired; cf. the comments of Theseus and his courtiers in the "interlude" in Act V:

(2) In comic parts and (3) the speech of characters of humble position; as in all the scenes where the "rude mechanicals" appear and discuss their play.

Other uses of prose by Shakespeare, not found in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, are for letters, proclamations, etc., and occasionally (as though even blank verse were too artificial) for the expression of emotion and mental derangement (cf. *King Lear*, III. 4).

HINTS ON SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLISH.

The following elementary hints are intended to remind young students of some simple but important facts which they are apt to forget when asked to explain points of grammar and idiom in Shakespeare's English.

To begin with, avoid using the word "mistake" in connection with Shakespearian English. Do not speak of "Shakespeare's mistakes." In most cases the "mistake" will be yours, not his. Remember that things in his English which appear to us irregular may for the most part be explained by one of two principles:—

(1) The difference between Elizabethan and modern English;

(2) The difference between spoken and written English.

(1) As to the former: what is considered bad English now may have been considered good English in Shakespeare's time. Language must change in the space of 300 years. Elizabethan English, recollect, contains an element of Old English, i.e. inflected English that had case-endings for the nouns, terminations for the verbs, and the like. By the end of the 16th century most of these inflections had died out, but some survived, and the influence of the earlier inflected stage still affected the language. Often when we enquire into the history of some Elizabethan idiom which seems to us curious we find that it is a relic of an old usage. Let us take an example.

There are numerous cases in Shakespeare where a verb in the present tense has the inflection *-s*, though the subject is plural; cf. the following lines in *Richard II.* II. 3. 4, 5:

> "These high wild hills and rough uneven ways
> *Draws* out our miles, and *makes* them wearisome."

The verbs *draws* and *makes* appear to be singular: but probably each is plural in agreement with its plural antecedents *hills* and *ways*; *s=es* being the plural inflection of the present sense used in the

Northern dialect of Old English. In the Southern dialect the inflection was *eth*; in the Midland *en*. When Shakespeare was born all three forms were getting obsolete; but all three are found in his works, *eth*[1] and *en*[2] very rarely, *es* or *s* many times. His use of the last is a good illustration (*a*) of the difference[3] between Shakespearian and modern English, (*b*) of one of the main causes of that difference—viz. the influence of a still earlier inflected English.

(2) A dramatist makes his characters speak, and tells his story through their mouths: he is not like a historian who writes the story in his own words. The English of a play which is meant to be spoken must not be judged by the same standard as the English of a History which is meant to be read. For consider how much more correct and regular in style a book usually is than a speech or a conversation. In speaking we begin a sentence one way and we may finish it in another, some fresh idea striking us or some interruption occurring. Speech is liable to constant changes, swift turns of thought; it leaves things out, supplying the omission, very likely, with a gesture; it often combines two forms[4] of expression. But a writer can correct and polish his composition until all irregularities are removed. Spoken English therefore is less regular than written English; and it is to this very irregularity that Shakespeare's plays owe something of their lifelike reality. If Shakespeare made his characters speak with the correctness of a copybook we should regard them as mere puppets, not as living beings.

Here is a passage taken from *Henry V.* (IV. 3. 34—36); suppose that comment on its "grammatical peculiarities" is required:

> "Rather proclaim it...
> That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
> Let him depart."

Two things strike us at once—"he *which*" and "That he...let him depart." "He *which*" is now bad English; then it was quite regular English. The student should say that the usage was correct in Elizabethan English, and give some illustration of it. The Prayer-Book will supply him with a very familiar one.

"That he...let him depart." A prose-writer would have finished

[1] Cf. *hath* and *doth* used as plurals.

[2] Cf. *wax-en*, II. 1. 56; see *Glossary*.

[3] Another aspect of it to which the *Notes* call attention is the free Elizabethan use of participial and adjectival terminations; see I. 1. 184, V. 171.

[4] Cf. the notes on I. 1. 129, IV. 2. 10, V. 250.

with the regular sequence "*may* depart." But Henry V. is supposed to say the words; and at the moment he is deeply stirred. Emotion leads him to pass suddenly from indirect to direct speech. The conclusion, less regular, is far more vivid. This brief passage therefore exemplifies the difference (*a*) between Elizabethan English and our own, (*b*) between spoken English and written. Always consider whether the one principle or the other can be applied.

Three general features of Shakespeare's English should be observed:—(1) its brevity, (2) its emphasis, (3) its tendency to interchange parts of speech.

(1) *Brevity:* Shakespeare often uses terse elliptical turns of expression. This couplet is from *Troilus and Cressida* (I. 3. 287, 288):

"And may that soldier a mere recreant prove
That means not, hath not, or is not in love!"

Put fully, the second line would run, "That means not *to be*, hath not *been*, or is not in love." Cf. again *Richard II.* v. 5. 26, 27.

"Who sitting in the stocks refuge their shame,
That many have and others must sit there";

i.e. 'console themselves with the thought that many have *sat* there.' This compactness of diction is very characteristic of Shakespeare. For note that the omission of the italicised words, while it shortens the form of expression, does not obscure the sense, since the words are easily supplied from the context. That is commonly the case with Shakespeare's *ellipses* or omissions: they combine brevity with clearness. See II. 1. 146 and II. 2. 73 (omission of the relative, a frequent and important *ellipse*).

(2) *Emphasis:* common examples of this are the double negative (II. 1. 201), and the double comparative or superlative (II. 1. 208, III. 1. 21, notes). Perhaps it is seen most conspicuously in the order of words.

(3) *Parts of speech interchanged:* "almost any part of speech can be used as any other part of speech" (Abbott). This feature is very important. As illustrations of it in this play take 'gallant' = 'gallant*ly*' (I. 2. 25), 'bootless' = 'bootless*ly*' (II. 1. 37), i.e. adjective = adverb; 'fair' = 'fair*ness*' (I. 1. 182), 'white' = 'white*ness*' (III. 2. 144), i.e. adjective = noun; and for noun = adjective cf. 'warrior' (II. 1. 71), for noun = verb cf. 'verse' (II. 1. 67).

INDEX OF WORDS AND PHRASES.

This list applies to the **Notes** *and* **Appendix**: *words of which longer explanations are given will be found in the* **Glossary**. *The references are to the pages.*

Abbreviations :—

adj. = adjective.
adv. = adverb.
n. = noun.
vb = verb.

abridgement 118
address (vb) 98
admire of 82
after-supper 118
against 104, 119
aggravate 86
all (adv.) 92
alone 104
approve 96
artificial 105
ask 84
aunt 89
austerity 78
badge 104
bait (vb) 105
barren 102
barm 88
bate 81
batty 108
beard 90
behowl 125
belike 79
bellows-mender 85
beshrew ! 96
blind-worm 95
blood 77, 79
blow (vb) 94
bolt 92
bootless 88
bosom 76
bouncing 90
brake 94
breath 92, 103
brisky 100
broach (vb) 122
burr 106
buskined 90
by'r lakin 98
canker 95
canker-blossom 107
capacity 120
catching 81
changeling 88
charm (vb) 112
cheek by jole 107
chide 92, 113
childing 91
chough 102
church-way 126
clerk 120
cloister 77
close (adj.) 102

cold 92
collied 79
compact of 117
companion 76
con 86, 119
conceit 76
concern (vb) 77
condole 84
confusion 80
contagious 90
continent 90
coy 110
cranny 100
create 127
critical 118
cross (n.) 79
cry "cuckoo" 101
cry mercy 102
"Cupid's flower" 112
cut bowstrings 87
cut thread and thrum 124
"dance *it*" 126
date 108
dead 103
debate (n.) 91
defeated 114
defect 99
desire you of 102
dewlap 89, 113
"Dian's bud" 111, 112, 151
die the death 77
discharge (vb) 86, 115
disfigure 77
distemperature 91
dole (n.) 124
dragon 108
draw a bill 86
duke 76
earthlier happy 78
edict 80
eglantine 94
elf 88
enamelled 95
enforced 102
eke 100
epilogues (in Shakespeare) 125
estate (vb) 78
exile (vb) 109
extenuate 79
faint 82
fair (n.) 81
fall (trans. vb) 121
fancy 80, 114
fancy-free 92
fancy-sick 104
favour 87, 111
fearful 120
fee 104
fell 88
fellow 111
fierce 111
figure (vb) 82
filly 89
flewed 113
flood 91
flourish of trumpets 120
flout 97
fond 97, 107
fond on 95
form 82
forth 80
forty 93
French-crown-colour 86
gait 127
gallant (adv.) 84
gaud 76
gentleness 97
give...the lie to 101
glance at 90
go about 115
go forward 115
gossip's cup 89
green eyes 125
griffin 94
grim-looked 122
grisly 121
grow to a point 83
hail down (vb) 82
hare-lip 127
heart 116
hempen home-spuns 100
heresy 98
hob 88
holla 114
honey-bag 101, 110
how chance? 79, 124
human 91, 96
imbrue 125
immediately 77
impeach 93

in=on 90
increase (n.) 91
in grace of 114
in snuff 123, 124
in souls 105
in spite of 105
intend 107
jangling 108
juvenal 100
knot-grass 107
know of 77
"leathern wings" 95
lion-fell 123
liquor 108
little 101
live 88
lob 88
lode-star 81
love-in-idleness 93
low 107
make all split 84
make mouths upon 106
man in the moon 121
marry! 83
marshal 97
maze 90
mazed 91
mechanical (n.) 102
misgraffed 79
more better 98
mote 124
mouse (vb) 124
mural 122
musk-rose 94
neaf 110
neeze 89
new 112
nine men's morris 90
nole 102
nuptial 79
obscenely 87
observation 112
o'er shoes 103
oes 105
of all loves 98
offer (vb) 115
office 95
of force 103
orb 87
original (n.) 91
other=others 111
other some 82
ounce 96
overflown 110
ox-lip 94
pageant 104
palpable-gross 125
paragon 115
pard 96
parlous 98
parts 105
passing 88
patched 115
paved 90
pearl 82
period 120
perséver 106
pipes of corn 89
plain 109
prefer 116
preposterously 104
present (vb) 100
prevailment 76
prey 98
princess 105
privilege 93
prodigious 127
prologue (=speaker of) 120
proper 86
properties 87
protest (vb) 78
pump (n.) 116
purple-in-grain 86
quail 124
quantity 82
questions 94
quire 89
recorder 120
rent (vb) 106
respect (vb) 80
revénue 80
rheúmatic 91
right (adj.) 107
ringlet 90
ripe (vb) 97
rock (vb) 112
rough-cast 100
russet-pated 102
run through fire 97
sampler 105

sanded 113
savour 88
schooling 79
scrip 83
seething 117
self-affairs 78
sensible 122
serpent's tongue (i.e. hiss) 128
set to 101
several 127
shadow 108, 128
shallow 102
sheen 88
simplicity 81
since = when 92
sinister 122
sister 77
skill 97
sleep = sleeping 114
small 85
solemnity 76
solemnly 112
sooth 97
sort (vb) 108
sort with 119
spaniel 93
speak you fair 93
sphere 87
sphery 97, 146
spiced 91
spleen 79
spotted 78
square (vb) 88
squash 102
stand close 103
stand upon points 120
stealth 107
steep 89
still (adv.) 82
streak 95
stretched 119
summer's spring 90
superpraise 105
"tailor" cry 89
take on 106
taste of (n.) 82
tear a cat 84
testy 108
the centre 103
thick-skin 102
thin 91
throstle 101
throw 95
tide 122
tiring-house 98
to 90, 120
to his head 78
toiled 119
touch 103, 107
toward 100
trace (vb) 88, 145, 146
translated 101
transported 115
transpose 82
troth 96
tuneable 81
unbreathed 119
unhardened 76
urge 107
Valentine (Saint) 114
villagery 88
virgin patent 78
votaress 91, 92
want (vb) 91
wash 91
waste 89, 125
watery moon 92
what cheer? 79
white (n.) 105
whither away? 81
wither out 75
without 80
woodbine 94, 150
worm 103
worser 93
wrath (adj.) 88
you were best 83
your 86

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My mistress with a monster .. loved an a
So she in one ... feel this injury Act III
Thou seest these lovers ... shall be peace
But we are spirits ... yet ere day Act III Sc
Welcome good Robin ... the fairy queen Act
Go one of you ... what nymphs are these
My lord, fair Helen ... true 'tis it Act IV
'Tis strange ... joys mirth Act V Sc I
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Now the hungry lion .. behind the do

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